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VOLUME LXIII, NUMBER 19263 WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1995

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Report highlights

EVELYN GORDON

WHILE the comptroller's report this year focused on the problems of road safety and immigrant absorption, it dealt with a wide range of other issues as well. The following are some of the highlights of the report.

- Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet hired dozens of new employees for his ministry. Among these were party activists, people who did work unrelated to the ministry's goals, and people brought in by lying to the Civil Service Commission about their job descriptions. In addition, the ministry largely ignored its obligation to set up new religious councils after the 1993 municipal elections, and the heads of religious councils were often vastly overpaid.
- Army reserve duty is unfairly divided up, resulting in low morale. The number of no-shows for reserve duty increased 54% from 1992 to 1995, and the army's "solution" to the problem was to call up twice the number of people it actually needed.
- Millions of dollars worth of equipment paid for by the Defense Ministry never made it to IDF warehouses, and neither the ministry nor the army have any idea where this equipment is.
- Many hospital patients who require intensive care are placed in other units instead, largely because the Health Ministry reimburses hospitals for only 20-30% of the costs of intensive care.
- Huge amounts of sewage and hazardous material flow unchecked into the country's water system each year, threatening both the water supply and the public's health.
- The Housing Ministry's "Build Your Own Apartment Program" meant to subsidize the needy, wound up subsidizing the more well-off instead. The ministry also lost NIS 3.8 billion over four years by undercharging contractors for infrastructure development and then failing to collect even the fees it did charge.
- The undervaluation of state lands by the Justice Ministry has cost the state hundreds of millions of shekels a year.
- The Labor Ministry is negligent in supervising protected housing for the elderly, and most such institutions do not even have licenses. It has also made no plans to deal with the long-term problems posed by the 12-fold increase in foreign workers since 1993.
- Education in the Druze and Arab sectors is still underfunded, though the situation has improved over the past few years. The Education Ministry's funding of haredi cultural activities was discriminatory.
- The Treasury and the Bank of Israel are negligent in their supervision of provident funds.
- Housing Minister Binjamin Ben-Eliezer made several political appointments in the Israel Building Center.
- Civil Guard volunteers are not properly trained in the use of weapons, and the police do not check whether volunteers have a psychiatric history that would make them ineligible to bear weapons.
- Private investigators who wiretap or otherwise violate people's privacy are not punished by the Justice Ministry.



State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat presents Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss with her annual report yesterday. (Isaac Harari)

Comptroller hits war on accidents, absorption policy, slams Shetreet

EVELYN GORDON

THE government's efforts to combat the country's major killer - road accidents - are inadequate and often misdirected, the 1996 State Comptroller's Report said.

"From the point of view of the number of deaths, [road accidents] exceed any enemy," State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat said yesterday as she presented the report to the Knesset State Control Committee. "I hope [the report] will help the country find solutions."

Among Ben-Porat's findings are that the government is ignoring the long-term solution of developing better public transportation; that both the number of tickets issued and the number of licenses revoked has dropped, thereby undermining deterrence of traffic violations; and that though overloaded trucks are a major source of accidents, weight limits here are much higher than they are in Europe, and the Transport Ministry fails to enforce the limits it does set.

The second major topic addressed is immigrant absorption, which the report found is "still not the top national priority" that it should be. As a result, immigrants' immense talent and brainpower are largely being wasted in inappropriate jobs, the report said.

The report also deals with several perennial issues, such as political appointments and wasted money. In the former category, the major perpetrators were Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet and Housing Minister Binjamin Ben-Eliezer. Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar was also scored for awarding a disproportionate number of road development projects to municipalities with Labor Party mayors, rather than implementing such projects on the basis of professional criteria.

Three items in the report have already been transferred to Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair so that he can consider opening

criminal investigations, Ben-Porat said. One of these involved the National Council for Accident Prevention, which has twice received government funds for projects to detect traffic violations and identify violators. The comptroller found that the 3,000 volunteers allegedly working on the project are largely fictional.

Fall comptroller report coverage, pages 8-12

The second item involved the Upper Nazareth office of the Israel Broadcasting Authority's licensing division, which, according to the report, falsely reported payments and failed to deposit cash payments in the bank.

The third item related to two roads in the South which the Housing Ministry's Public Works Department hired a particular contractor to pave. The contractor was paid to use a certain standard of material, but actually used cheaper, inferior materials - with the PWD's knowledge - resulting in damage to the roads which cost hundreds of millions of shekels to repair.

"There are also other matters which we are still considering [sending to Ben-Yair]," Ben-Porat said.

Asked by Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss to look back on her eight years as comptroller, Ben-Porat said every government she has dealt with has taken her reports seriously. Sometimes, she added, they have even fixed the problems she pointed out.

"But new faults surface all the time," she said. "I have to be on guard to ensure that power doesn't corrupt" - because the knowledge that there is someone watching is often the

only check on waste and corruption, she said.

"I expect the government to do more to inspect itself, precisely because of the power it has, so that we will be a society based on morality."

Ben-Porat stressed that the upcoming elections had not influenced the report in any way.

"I wrote what I found," she said. "I did not change a word of what I wrote because of the early elections."

The State Control Committee, meanwhile, decided to begin discussing the report before the elections. Committee chairman David Magen (Likud) had raised the possibility of postponing hearings until after the elections, so that they would not be perceived as political, but opposition MKs insisted that certain topics are too critical to be put off for five weeks. The committee's initial discussions will focus on road safety, the Religious Affairs Ministry, the Housing Ministry, and the Israel Lands Administration.

The committee will also give precedence to the report's discussion of the unequal allocation of army reserve duty, at the request of Ra'anana Cohen (Labor). Cohen, who noted that 80 percent of all reserve duty is done by 30% of the reservists, while half of all potential reservists are never called up at all, demanded that the committee use its authority under a recent amendment to set up a state commission of inquiry into this subject.

Ben-Porat, however, opposed this idea, saying it is premature. First, the committee should find out what the army plans to do about the problem, she said, and then, if the army does nothing, it should try to solve the problem by legislation.

Opposition MKs predictably blasted the government for the report's findings.

(Continued on Page 2)

Russia continuing to close down Jewish Agency aliya operations

BATSHEVA TSUR

THE Russian authorities yesterday stopped aliya activities in the town of Piatrgorsk, raising fears that Jewish emigration from Russia may be halted.

Officials of the Ministry of Emigration and Police arrived at the offices of the Jewish Agency in Piatrgorsk at noon, and told the officials there to present documents certifying their accreditation to operate in the area, the agency spokesman said.

Later, the officials asked the emissaries to accompany them to an aliya seminar being held in the city and proceeded to read aloud a decision by the deputy justice minister forbidding the agency to operate in Russia as of April 2. Seminar participants were ordered to disperse.

Piatrgorsk, in the northern Caucasus, is an area of many ethnic and political tensions, and there has been heavy emigration from the region. The agency uses the town as one of its regional activity centers. In recent months, Jewish refugees from nearby Chechnya have also congregated there.

Any disruption of the activities in the area will disrupt aliya, agency officials confirmed last night.

The cancellation of the semi-

nar is one more episode in a string of events over the past three weeks that have raised doubts regarding Russia's attitude toward agency activities.

On April 8, a letter from the director of the Russian Council for Cultural and Religious Organizations effectively withdrew the agency's mandate. This was followed by a letter from the deputy minister of justice to all local authorities notifying them of the cancellation of the accreditation and the need to stop Jewish Agency activity. The head of the CIS department in the agency's head office in Jerusalem was dispatched to Moscow for talks with officials there.

The closure of the agency's offices in Birobjan followed, then notification was sent to agency offices in bordering Makhachkale about the closure. The authorities then announced they would reevaluate the Na'ale-16 program, which brings teenagers to Israel without their parents for study and possible aliya. The authorities also announced they would investigate the permits of the agency's emissaries.

A measurable increase in antisemitic incidents in Russia has

been felt recently, including a small bomb in the Jewish center in Yaroslav and antisemitic graffiti on a number of Jewish properties in St. Petersburg.

During a visit to Israel last week, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov met with Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Ehud Barak and the issue of agency activities was raised and assumed to have been resolved.

Deep concern was expressed by Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg, who emphasized that the agency is doing all it can to maintain positive relations with the local Russian authorities. Burg will leave tonight for the US for special consultations with heads of Jewish organizations.

Burg voiced his protest in a letter to Russian Justice Minister Kavilov Valentine. "The agency operates in dozens of countries and has never been subjected to such treatment," Burg said.

The agency has taken the stance that it is preferable not to enter into an international publicity campaign with regard to the possible new direction in Russian policy. But Jewish organizations around the world have been asked to prepare plans to assist if the need arises.

US report: Syria still sponsoring terror

HILLEL KUTTLER
 WASHINGTON

ALTHOUGH Syria is involved in peace negotiations with Israel, it continues to shelter terrorist groups and their training camps, the US State Department said in a report released yesterday.

It again listed the same seven countries last year's report said sponsored terrorism: Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Cuba, Sudan, and North Korea.

The report states that Palestinian attacks against Israelis declined from 79 to 33, representing "less frequent, but more lethal suicide bombings, with five actions claimed by Islamic Jihad's Shkaki faction and five by Hamas."

"Damascus continues to negotiate seriously to achieve a peace accord with Israel and has taken some steps to restrain the international activities of these groups," the annual report on patterns of global terrorism says.

(Continued on Page 2)

US, Israel sign accord on fight against terror

HILLEL KUTTLER and DAVID MAKOVSKY
 WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Shimon Peres yesterday signed an accord that will deepen anti-terrorism cooperation through research and development and intelligence sharing.

"Today, with the US-Israel Counter-Terrorism Accord, we strengthen our partnership to stop the enemies of peace. With every big step on the path to peace, the enemies grow more and more desperate and know a new day is dawning in the Middle East," Clinton told journalists following the signing. "By murdering innocent people, they hope to murder the growing hope for peace."

"We must do everything in our power to stop the killing and bring the terrorists to justice. That is the only way to give those that have chosen peace the confidence they need that they have made the right choice ... This agreement does just that."

Peres and Clinton also discussed the international effort to help reconstruct Lebanon following Operation Grapes of Wrath.

In a joint communique, Clinton and Peres stated a committee headed by Barak and Christopher would explore the formalizing of strategic cooperation.

Following the meeting with Clinton, Christopher gave Peres a letter containing an appendix to the cease-fire agreement stating that the US "understands" that the prohibition against attacks on Israel from southern Lebanon refers not only to "use of certain areas as launching grounds for attacks," but also to their use as "bases for the launch of attacks."

Peres told reporters that he was "very satisfied" with the contents of the letter.

Peres also raised the issue of the release of Jonathan Pollard, but would not reveal any details.

Speaking to reporters on his flight to Washington, Peres charged that Iran is pressing Islamic Jihad very hard to stage terror attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad.

"Iran is pressing for actions abroad. Iran is pressing like crazy on Jihad," he said. He indicated he is concerned about "significant" cells recently uncovered in Latin America and France.

He also insisted Iran is giving Hamas, over which it holds less sway, bonuses for attacks it carries out against Israel. According to a recent report by *The Times* of London, Iran gave Damascus-based Hamas leader Imad Alami \$120,000 as a "bonus" for the spate of suicide attacks.

He attacked four unspecified European countries which just extended credits to Iran, terming this a "fatal mistake."

He said Israel would be active in seeking to encourage the establishment of an international consortium on behalf of Lebanon, just as there is one on behalf of the Palestinians. However, he said Israel is nowhere near deciding how it would assist Lebanon.

The anti-terror agreement seeks to expand bilateral cooperation, and consultation with other nations in preventing terrorism and responding to terrorist incidents.

It looks at "very practical ways in which we can work together," Clinton said, and provides for "greater cooperation" through exchanges of data, training, expert delegations, crisis-management expertise for handling terrorist episodes, high-level anti-terrorism policy coordination, and assisting other countries in the fight against terrorism.

It also provides for extradition of terrorist suspects and establishes a committee of counter-terrorism experts. The group will meet regularly during the year, alternating between the two countries and will also hold discussions as necessary.

Clinton said he and Peres discussed such an agreement during his visit to Israel in March.

The signing was postponed due to severe fog in New York that delayed Peres' arrival here and necessitated a more modest ceremony than planned.

Before leaving Washington late last night, Peres was to meet with visiting Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. He indicated that he expected one of the topics to be the release of 25 women prisoners.

Five of those prisoners need to be pardoned, since they were convicted of being accomplices to murder. President Ezer Weizman has the authority to pardon three of them, and OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan the other two.

Ya'alon: Terror attack expected in coming days

LIAT COLLINS

OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon said yesterday there are intensive preparations by terror groups and Iran to launch attacks in Israel and abroad against Israeli and Jewish targets.

According to an official briefing, Ya'alon told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, "I expect this will be our fate in the coming days."

"We see intensive activity both by Hamas and Islamic Jihad to carry out attacks in Israel, and by Hizbullah and Iran abroad," the military intelligence chief said.

He said Hamas and Islamic Jihad have an active infrastructure which has not been eliminated since the last wave of attacks.

Regarding the possibility of attacks abroad, he said the Iraqis are investing a great deal in creating a terror infrastructure. All attacks wind up being connected to Iranian intelligence or Iran's Revolutionary Guard, he said.

Despite the pessimism, Ya'alon said the Palestinian Authority has hit at a large part of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad infrastructure in areas under its control. He said they had found activists and storage places for weapons and ammunition including 1,000 kilograms of TNT hidden in Gaza.

In contrast to previous reports, Ya'alon said the Palestinian Authority is making an effort to stamp out the terrorists operating from the autonomous areas but the main leaders have yet to be caught.

Ya'alon also referred to the two recent "work accidents" by terrorists who blew themselves up before they could carry out attacks. He said both terrorists belonged to extremist Islamic organizations. Both cases showed characteristics seen in suicide attacks.

He said the Palestinians are expecting the IDF withdrawal from Hebron to go ahead as fast as possible but would probably accept a well-defined plan for withdrawal in stages.

He added that even if the statements about the changes in the Palestinian Covenant are ambiguous, the intention to change it is clear and was reached by an impressive majority. He said Yasser Arafat remains the clear leader of the Palestinians.



Begin: Government in conspiracy with PLO on covenant

JON IMMANUEL

THE Palestinian National Council resolution which cancelled articles of the PLO Covenant has been altered retroactively to conform to the wishes of the Israeli government, Likud MK Ze'ev Begin said yesterday.

Begin made his charges after talking yesterday with OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

"What appears now is that there is no [single] version of the resolution. This is a conspiracy concealed from the Israeli electorate by the Israeli government and the PLO," he said in an interview yesterday.

Begin pointed out that decisions taken on other issues at last week's PNC meetings were published together in the Palestinian press. Omitted, however, was the crucial resolution on the charter. He said that Ya'alon told him this was because "there is still an argument about the specific wording."

The resolution, which was passed in closed session of the PNC by 504-54 last Wednesday night, was published in slightly different forms in the Arabic press the next morning, some alluding to a change in the covenant that will take place, others to a change that takes place now.

According to Wafa, the PLO press agency, which distributed an apparently official version the next day, the PNC decided:

1. "It is changing the national charter by canceling the articles

which contradict the letters of mutual recognition."

2. "The PNC instructs its legal committee to draft a new national program and to present it to the central council in its next meeting."

Several PNC members present at the session have told *The Jerusalem Post* that this was the text of the resolution on which they voted. "It is changing" expresses the present tense but can sometimes refer to a future action.

Everybody in the closed session understood that the covenant was canceled from the moment the resolution was passed. "It is canceled. The old charter is inoperative," said Hanan Ashrawi, who voted against the resolution because she wanted to delay the change.

The resolutions did not mention the specific articles that were canceled, said Hanan Ashrawi, who voted against the resolution because she wanted to delay the change.

Exactly which articles have been canceled will only be clear from the text of the new charter which chief PLO negotiator Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) said will be presented within six months.

Begin, however, quoted Ya'alon as saying the new charter will appear sometime "in the next three years," accompanying the final talks to their conclusion.



Mourners raise their hands yesterday in a bid to carry coffins of some of the 102 people who were killed by IDF shells at Kafr Kana. Political and religious leaders of all Lebanese parties and sects joined thousands of mourners at the funeral, as Lebanon's top Shiite Moslem cleric Sheikh Mohammed Mehdi Shamseddine called the killing an 'Israeli crime.' The dead were buried together in a special grave laid out with 102 concrete and brick niches in a plot next to the headquarters of the Fijian contingent to UNIFIL. (AP)

IDF, SLA return fire in first Hizbullah attack since cease-fire

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN and LIAT COLLINS

HIZBULLAH fired mortars and anti-aircraft cannons at two South Lebanon Army positions yesterday, drawing retaliatory fire by the IDF and SLA, the army said. There were no reports of injuries or damage.

It was the first exchange of fire since Operation Grapes of Wrath ended on Saturday with an agreement to leave civilians out of the cycle of violence. According to the agreement, the IDF and SLA maintain the right to defend themselves and return fire at Hizbullah gunmen.

The SLA position hit was at Sojod on the northern edge of the security zone. Security sources said Israeli gunners fired back about two dozen 155mm artillery rounds.

Hizbullah will undoubtedly try to whittle away at the understandings reached with Israel last week, OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday. He said the key to the understandings would be what happens following the elections and regarding the resumption of peace negotia-

tions. Syria will then determine whether it serves its interest to preserve the understandings, he said.

Ya'alon said the campaign had shown up some differences between Hizbullah and Syria. Hizbullah had not wanted to conclude the hostilities but Syria forced it to, he said. Syria was apparently angry at Hizbullah for dragging it into the campaign and even accused it of violating the previous understandings, reached following Operation Accountability in 1993.

Ya'alon said Syria agreed to the recent understandings because it feared an offensive by IDF ground forces and Israeli attacks in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley.

Hizbullah applied the lessons it learned from Operation Accountability, Ya'alon said. Among other tactics, it stored missiles close to the launchers and dispersed the launchers

among villages. It planned to use 100 missiles a day but ultimately fired only 80 of them daily.

Hizbullah decided in advance not to escalate the violence to avoid a strong Israeli response, Ya'alon said, noting that it had used about half its arsenal of 2,000 missiles.

Ya'alon said the Lebanese government had shown greater independence than in the past. Although it still required Syrian endorsement, it was speaking out more, he said. "If it was up to Beirut, Hizbullah would be thrown out of southern Lebanon," he said.

Asked about the civilian displacement during the campaign, Ya'alon said: "[Syrian President Hafez] Assad doesn't shed a tear over a single refugee."

He said Hizbullah obscured the figures of its casualties while playing up the number of civilians killed. Altogether between 163 and 200 Lebanese were killed in the campaign including civilians, soldiers and terrorists, he said.

Unmanned aerial vehicle has strong support on Capital Hill

HILLEL KUTTLER WASHINGTON

SENATE majority whip Trent Lott (R-Mississippi) pledged to seek \$24 million this year for further US-Israel development of the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).

Lott, who chairs the strategic forces subcommittee, told an AIPAC forum Monday night that the program would give both countries the capability to knock down enemy missiles before they leave enemy territory. Last year \$15 million was allocated.

Lott said later that the funds would be budgeted in the defense authorization bill to be prepared this week, and that the proposal enjoys strong bipartisan support.

"We want to go the next step beyond the Arrow program," Lott told *The Jerusalem Post*. "It's just the next step in missile defense [cooperation]." The boost-phase intercept and Arrow programs, along with the recently announced Nautilus laser venture, are the three major joint missile defense programs.

Lott said that in Monday's meeting between Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and other Senate leaders, the discussion dealt mainly with missile defense issues.

Lautenberg Center annual dinner will be non-kosher, and begin on Shabbat

JUDY SIEGEL

THE annual fundraising dinner for Jerusalem's Lautenberg Center for General and Tumor Immunology, to be held in New York's Grand Hyatt Hotel on Saturday, will be non-kosher and begin before the end of Shabbat, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned. It is highly unusual for American gala dinners benefiting Israeli organizations to violate Shabbat and kashruth.

Rabbi Ronald Gray, executive vice president of Boys Town Jerusalem Foundation of America (BTJFA), yesterday demanded a public apology from the American Friends organization of the

Lautenberg Center because BTJFA's chairman Josh Weston is the guest of honor of the dinner and was unaware of these breaches of Jewish observance.

A few weeks ago, the fact that Laurence Tisch, the billionaire owner of the Lorillard Tobacco Company, would be dinner chairman raised the ire of anti-smoking activists in the US and Israel.

Gray wrote a protest letter to Paul Denson, chairman of the endowment committee of the Lautenberg Center's American

friends group. Boys Town is an Orthodox educational institution for boys in Jerusalem's Bayit Vegan quarter.

"In this day, when the main thread of unity of our people is in the name of 'Jewish continuity,' it's difficult to understand how such a prestigious Israel institution could hold a major function which undermines two of the basic tenets of our sacred heritage - Shabbat and the dietary laws," Gray wrote.

The Post called Denson's office,

but no comment was available. An official of the Lautenberg Center in Jerusalem, which conducts cancer research under the auspices of the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School, said guests at the dinner were told they could order kosher packaged dinners from a New York restaurant that would be heated up on the site. The official said he was very sorry to hear about the Shabbat and kashruth violation. Prof. David Weiss, the Lautenberg Center's director, who is on sabbatical in New York, is Orthodox, and reportedly will arrive late to the dinner.

Weizman warmly received in Moslem villages for Id el-Adha festival

BATSHEVA TSUR

CONTRARY to the advice of the security forces, President Ezer Weizman yesterday stepped directly into the midst of a cheering crowd in the western Galilee village of Arrabe, shook hands with the villagers and accepted an invitation to the local mosque.

Weizman was on a tour of four Moslem villages to mark the Id el-Adha festival. He also visited Abu el-Hija, Sakhnin and Deir Hanna.

The festival was celebrated in subdued fashion this year because of Operation Grapes of Wrath and the Kana village tragedy, in which some 100 civilians were accidentally killed by IDF fire.

In the first two villages, Weizman was allowed to meet only notable and people who had been checked by security. But when he

reached Arrabe, he went into a large crowd of people who were shouting "lakh alla, let's hope there will be peace." At that point, the local imam also invited Weizman into the local mosque.

Asked by reporters about the redeployment in Hebron, Weizman skirted the issue but stressed that any agreement should please both Israel and the Palestinians. "In the long run, we'll reach agreement with the Palestinians," the president said. "Arafat is in Gaza and we are not in Ramallah or Jenin or Bethlehem. We must sit down and find the best solution for both sides now because when both sides are satisfied, life is easier afterwards. An agreement which one of the sides is not pleased with, is an opening for problems."

Two pedestrians hit by buses in Tel Aviv

TWO pedestrians were hurt in Tel Aviv in separate accidents involving Dan company buses on Monday night and yesterday morning.

An 80-year-old woman was seriously hurt when a No. 18 bus hit her as she crossed the street at a crosswalk.

She was taken to Ichilov Hospital.

A Rishon LeZion man, 27, was seriously hurt Monday night while crossing Derech Petah Tikva by a bus traveling in the public transportation lane. He was also taken to Ichilov.

In another accident yesterday, eight people were slightly hurt when a minibus slammed into the back of a bus near the Golan Junction in Lower Galilee.

The injured were taken to Poriya Hospital near Tiberias. (AP)

SYRIA

(Continued from Page 1)

"Syria continues to use its influence to moderate Hizbullah and Palestinian rejectionist groups when tension and violence in southern Lebanon escalate. It has, however, allowed Iran to resupply Hizbullah via Damascus."

The report states that "radical terrorist groups," like the PFLP-GC, have training camps both within Syria and within "Syrian-controlled areas of Lebanon," and that groups, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Japanese Red Army, are granted "basing privileges or refuge."

It says that Syrian officials are not directly involved in planning or carrying out terrorist acts.

It calls Iran "the premier state sponsor of international terrorism" - including such groups as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the PFLP-GC, and the Kurdish PKK - and says it finances groups that pose a threat to Americans.

The report found that lethal attacks around the world declined in 1995, while overall acts rose from 323 to 440.

'Beirut turned out lights to fool Israel'

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Lebanon said yesterday it turned out the lights during Operation Grapes of Wrath to fool Israel into believing that it had crippled the country's electricity network for months.

Authorities in fact restored 24-hour electricity in Beirut on Sunday, a day after the 16-day operation ended, and Electricity Minister Elias Hobeika said in remarks published in newspapers yesterday that they had been ready to do so several days earlier.

Hobeika, a Christian militia intelligence chief in Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, said he exaggerated

the damage to two transformer substations near Beirut rocketed by Israeli warplanes so that Israel would not attack other power stations.

The Jambour and Bsaleem substations were hit on April 14 and 15 in what Israel said were reprisal attacks for damage caused by Hizbullah rocket attacks to the power network in northern Israel.

Hobeika announced at the time that the Israeli raids had cut Lebanon's power supply to four hours a day and repairs would take more than a year and would cost up to \$80 million.

"The Israelis said they would tar-

get civil installations and we took their threats seriously," Hobeika said.

"They wanted to plunge Beirut into darkness, so we ordered municipalities to put out street lights and we imposed draconian rationing to make the Israelis think their plan had succeeded," Hobeika said.

Hobeika said EDL began "provisional" repairs immediately after the raids and power supplies were now round-the-clock in central Beirut and 18 hours daily in the suburbs. The suburbs would be fully restored in 10 days, he added.

COMPROLLER

(Continued from Page 1)

"This is one of the harshest reports ever issued," said Silvan Shalom (Likud), citing the "astronomical" number of new appointments in the Religious Affairs Ministry in particular, as well as the fact that the ministry got two appointments through the Civil Service Commission by lying about them.

port that has ever been published against a particular ministry and minister," but scored many other issues as well.

"With regard to traffic accidents, we, the government [and the Knesset], are shown as schleimiel. We talk a lot, but do little," he said.

Cohen, the only coalition member present, responded with a vigorous defense of the government.

"In a government that acts, there are often things that need to be fixed," he said. "This government has done more than any previous government... And considering this enormous amount of action, you are praising the government with a report like this."

SOCIAL & PERSONAL

THE WEEKLY MEETING of the English-speaking Jerusalem Rotary Club will take place today at 1:30 p.m. at the Yeha, King David Street.

Shaul Baumann will speak on "Folkish Antisemitism," the ideological forerunner of National Socialism.

Dan Tichon (Likud) also called the section on the Religious Affairs Ministry "the harshest re-

UN agency warns of water crisis

STEVE RODAN

THE Middle East faces an acute water shortage by the end of the decade, says a UN agency report to be released today.

The report, by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, warns that by the year 2000 six out of seven East African countries and all five North African countries bordering the Mediterranean will be sustaining water shortages. These include Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. Israel was not mentioned.

"Overextraction of groundwater is a growing problem in many areas, most acute in the Near East, where it leads to salt-water intrusion and causes irreversible damage to aquifers," the report says.

The shortages will lead to rivalry between countries sharing water tributaries, such as the Jordan River. "Competition is certain to increase among riparian countries and among sectors within the countries," the report says.

The FAO says Mediterranean countries will face severe ecological problems within a few years because of urban expansion and tourism, which are destroying water resources and farmland.

"The Mediterranean environment needs to be preserved and sustained without depriving the millions of people who live on its shores of the benefits of economic development and technical progress," the report says. "Environmentally-benign technologies should be further developed and shared among countries."

The FAO report was prepared for its European regional conference, meeting this week in Tel Aviv. The conference is a biennial gathering of ministers from the 40 member countries of FAO in the European region, who are preparing for the first World Food Summit to be held November 13-17 in Rome.

The water crisis forecast by the FAO will hit several areas of the Mediterranean basin, particularly the Middle East and North Africa. By the year 2000, the report says, North African countries will face acute water shortages.

The FAO states a country as water deficient when water supplies average less than 100 cubic meters per capita.

The report says that irrigation accounts for 80 percent of water use in the area, with the greatest increase in demand in cities and towns. The FAO calls for increased water conservation and the use of brackish groundwater, recycled water and desalinated seawater.

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Hebron redeployment can be delayed until after elections - Barak

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

FOREIGN Minister and chairman of Prime Minister Shimon Peres's election campaign Ehud Barak said yesterday that "nothing terrible would happen if the IDF's redeployment in Hebron would be postponed until after the elections."

Speaking at a press briefing, Barak stressed that Hebron is not being evacuated of its Jewish settlers. "The army's deployment there is being changed so that the Palestinian quarters are run by the Palestinians, while the IDF's presence is being tightened around the Jewish quarters. Not a single settler is being moved out. There is no cause for concern if all this takes place after the elections," he said.

Barak said the date for the redeployment will be determined in a few days, according to the security considerations in this delicate period.

Barak said the government will be judged by its achievements, reflected in the following three events: the results of Operation Grapes of Wrath; changing the

Palestinian Covenant; and the package of military and diplomatic agreements signed with the United States.

He noted that the main goal of the diplomatic agreements is to reach international cooperation in the war against terrorism, the only real chance for defeating the terror organizations.

He added that "the results of Grapes of Wrath are intended as a way to renew the political process and peace talks with Syria and Lebanon. The quietest times on the northern border until now were when we were engaged in talks with the Syrians."

Labor campaign sources said yesterday that the campaign staff does not intend to react to Likud leader MK Binyamin Netanyahu's attacks on Peres at the Likud's election kick-off rally on Monday.

"It is inappropriate for the prime minister, especially of Peres's standing and weight, to deal with Netanyahu. It would only raise Netanyahu to a level above his station," a campaign source said.

Inquiry demanded into unequal reserve burden

COALITION Knesset faction chairman MK Ra'anan Cohen yesterday asked the chairman of the State Control Committee, Likud MK David Magen, to establish a commission of inquiry to look into the inequality in army reserve duty.

A recent check by Cohen, chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee's subcommittee on IDF manpower, revealed that about half the available pool of reservists are never called to duty, that 30% of reservists perform 80% of the duty, and that only 4.9% of reservists serve more than 31 days a year.

Cohen said this situation has serious negative social and security implications, and that everything possible must be done to change it. He added that it undermines the credibility of what was supposed to be a people's army.

He said the just-released State Comptroller's Report backed up his findings, but said there is still a need for an inquiry to get at the root of the problem and find a solution. Cohen is to meet with Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak tomorrow to discuss the matter.

(Itim)

IDF: Comptroller's recommendations being implemented

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

THE IDF yesterday reacted to the comptroller's report by stressing that it had already started to amend some of the faults the comptroller cited, and did not wait for the publication of the report.

Concerning reserve duty, the IDF spokesman acknowledged that the burden on combat reservists is great and that steps had already been taken to ease it. These included lowering to 45 the age reservists from these units were released, reducing to 25 days maximum reserve duty for combat reservists over 40 and improving the conditions for the unit commanders. The IDF said that it has also given reserve units an additional quota of soldiers so commanders can be more flexible when it

came to leaves.

The IDF Spokesman also said that steps have been taken this past year to improve motivation among reservists, but it did not specify what they were. It noted that the IDF would be conducting two surveys on motivation in the coming year, one among reserve battalion commanders and one among regular reservists.

The IDF noted that it had also set up dozens of new companies made up of regular soldiers to take over tasks which had been given to reserve combat units.

Regarding its information efforts, the IDF reacted by saying it had published a

pamphlet aimed at helping field commanders convey information to their troops. While not totally dismissing the importance of information, the IDF reacted by saying that "to its regret, battalion and company commanders were not trained in information due to the shortness of their command courses." The IDF also said that while regular soldiers needed much more information activities than reservists, officers from reserve units were welcome to use the information packages made for conscripts.

The IDF Spokesman marked with satisfaction the comptroller's reported improvements in war games and officer training.

IAF probe into helicopter crash fails to reach definitive conclusions

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

THE air force investigation into the crash earlier this month of a transport helicopter, in which seven people died, could not say whether the Yasur 2000, a modified CH-53, went down because of a mechanical malfunction or human error.

"We may never know what happened," OC Air Force Maj.-Gen. Herzl Bodinger said yesterday. "This is because the helicopter totally burned up, and there was virtually no evidence left for the investigators to examine."

The helicopter crashed while on a training exercise in the Judean Desert on April 2, killing the pilot and co-pilot, and five soldiers, one a woman trooper who was filming the exercise. Two soldiers survived the crash. The U.S.-made Sikorsky helicopter was not equipped with a

black box, but the air force had hoped that a recording of the cockpit conversations or the videotape of the exercise had survived the crash.

The inquiry had retraced the flight, sifted through the wreckage, and even examined the pilot's medical records for possible clues. But it failed to reach a conclusive answer.

The IDF Spokesman said the IAF would not release the report for now. *Ha'aretz* reported that the inquiry would be shared with the US.

In a related development, an Apache helicopter was forced to make an emergency landing in a field in the northern Galilee after a bombing mission in Lebanon last week. The IDF Spokesman denied reports it had been shot down, saying it landed due to technical problems.



Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni yesterday presents Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert with a segment of the ribbon she just cut to dedicate the renovated post office branch opposite the Old City's Herod's Gate. Looking on is Postal Authority chairman Amos Mar-Haim. The renovations cost NIS 1 million.

(Hanoth Gritskiy/Israel Sun)

Shetreet dismisses comptroller's criticism over excess staffers

EVELYN GORDON

RELIGIOUS Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet, who was one of the major culprits on the improper appointments front in this year's State Comptroller's Report, yesterday insisted that the comptroller's findings were merely "technical" faults.

The report found that Shetreet, who took over the ministry in February 1995, had by the end of the year hired 20 new workers - in a ministry whose maximum number of positions is supposed to be 105.5 - plus another 24 outside advisors. The latter, all hired without a tender, multiplied the ministry's budget for this item by 22.

Shetreet also doubled the number of workers hired from temporary agencies, from 50 to 100, thereby circumventing the manpower ceiling.

Of his 20 new workers, who included three advisors, two spokesmen, a secretary and two drivers, only three received approval from the Civil Service Commission. In two of these cases, the ministry got the appointments approved by lying about the job for which the employee was being hired.

Two of the new employees were Labor Party activists, one of whom was hired for a job requiring experience and a university education, even though he had no experience and only a high-school education.

One of the outside advisors was paid for doing a study on rainfall over the Mediterranean Sea - which, the comptroller noted, has nothing to do with the ministry's job - while another advisor was given a job which Civil

Service regulations require to be held by a regular employee.

Finally, the report found that the ministry ordered a government car under false pretenses, saying it would be used to map the country's synagogues and mikves when it was really devoted to the personal use of three employees. In another case, one worker was given both a car allowance and a government car.

Shetreet, however, brushed off these findings. "Implementing reforms in the ministry necessitated the employment of new workers," he said. "The defects were of a strictly administrative/technical nature... The findings show that earlier reports [of irregularities] were baseless, and blown up out of all proportion. Out of dozens of workers investigated, the comptroller commented only on a few instances."

Aloni: Research priorities should be set by professionals

JUDY SIEGEL

SCIENCE Minister Shulamit Aloni yesterday criticized the Israel Academy of Sciences for not allocating all the money for research it has available. Shortly before her speech, academy president Prof. Ya'acov Ziv admitted that some of its grants had not been disbursed to scientists, but he did not explain why.

At a conference of academics, industrialists, and economists in Jerusalem, Aloni called on the government to increase its funding for scientific research related to infrastructure, saying that priorities "should be set by professionals, not politicians."

She added that although her own ministry was established years ago for coalition reasons, it deserves to exist because of its role in promoting the research and development needed for economic progress.

The conference on technology and its economic implications was organized by the Science and Finance ministries.

Science Ministry Director-General Zvi Yanni proposed the establishment of "national civilian mini-laboratories" attached to government research bodies that would develop projects from the stage of basic research through the finished product.

Likud: We'll use comptroller's report in our campaign

SARAH HONIG

FOLLOWING publication of the state comptroller's report, the Likud charged yesterday that "ministries have been turned into courts of Ottoman sultans, intended to serve only the master's interests."

Likud said its campaign team will make great use of the report in upcoming TV broadcasts. "Labor's promises about a clean administration and changed priorities have gone up in the thick smoke of corruption," said information drive head Limor Livnat.

Livnat said the Likud "plans to do to Labor what it did to us with the comptroller's report four years ago. That report was seen as one of the causes for the Likud's downfall, and there is no doubt - by any objective criteria - that this report is by far more damning than the 1992 one was."

Meanwhile, the Likud has demanded that the Knesset State Control Committee hold regular sessions over the next few weeks to discuss the findings. The committee chairman is Geshet's David Magen, who has already expressed readiness to call the committee into session, should the signatures

of the necessary one-third of committee members be forthcoming.

"Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet should resign immediately," MK Dan Tichon said. "The report finds that his mass political appointments were geared to serve his primary campaign interests. The comptroller hints at deceit, dishonesty, and corruption. The Transport Ministry's battle against road accidents is depicted as clumsy, at best, while money was spent liberally on aggrandizing the minister and on political appointments."

Tichon notes that "housing subsidies went where they should not have and NIS 4.3 billion earmarked for low-cost housing and infrastructure disappeared, while ministry offices became political headquarters. This is a carnival of corruption. Such a wholesale rate of political appointments is unprecedented."

MK Sylvan Shalom demanded that the comptroller prepare a report on the functioning of the Civil Service Commission, because its personnel claimed they lack the tools to check ministerial reports.

Netanyahu gets backing of two top Mideast experts

SARAH HONIG

LIKUD prime ministerial candidate Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday received the endorsement of two of the country's leading Middle East experts - Yehoshua Porat and Haim Shaked.

Both said they find it impossible to rely on Prime Minister Shimon Peres. Most recently they were appalled at what they see as the deception perpetrated on the Israeli public with the claim that the PNC amended the Palestinian Covenant.

Porat, a professor at the Hebrew University, held the 13th slot on the Meretz list for the current Knesset and was next in line to enter the House. Shaked, a professor at Tel Aviv University, has served as the TAU dean of humanities and as head of the Dayan Center for Mideastern Research.

Both met with Netanyahu yesterday morning to express their support for his candidacy. Porat said he was outraged by "this brazen attempt to dupe the public with the lie that the PNC had scrapped anti-Israel clauses from its charter."

"...The sad fact is that the PNC decided only to refer the matter to a committee and we don't so much

as know even what clauses or what number of clauses they will deal with."

Porat said that Peres, in accepting the PNC announcement at face value, was "unworthy and unreliable" to serve as prime minister. Shaked agreed that the covenant had not been annulled and added that Operation Grapes of Wrath was full of similar deception.

"Throughout history Israel avoided introducing the Europeans into our arena and now we admitted the worse of the bunch - France - with its proven ties to Syria and Iran," he said. "Hizbullah was recognized as a legitimate power and all the fire was concentrated against Iran, as if Syria were spotless. The public was not told the truth."

He noted that he and Porat also object to the manner "Peres conducts his negotiations with Syria, promising the entire Golan to Assad at the outset. I served in military intelligence at the time the Agranat Commission examined the failings of the Yom Kippur War and now I see the same entrapment in an erroneous conception."

Labor promises to snuff out cigarette smoking in election ads

JUDY SIEGEL

IS the Labor Party using subliminal advertising of cigarettes in its election campaign video films? The answer is no, according to party spokesman Yoram Dori.

Anti-smoking activists were upset to see TV Channel 1's unveiling Sunday night of the Labor Party's new jingle accompanied by a three-second close-up of a man smoking a cigarette.

Dori said that the party had provided just the jingle; Channel 1 had combined it with the footage.

But Dori said he was glad to hear the reminder. He promised to speak to Interior Minister Haim Ramon, who is responsible for the party's election propaganda on TV, to make sure that cigarettes make no appearance on campaign ads.

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Ministry of Religious Affairs

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Inter-dat - Internet

The Ministry of Religious Affairs is glad to announce the opening of an Internet site, devoted to religious services in Israel, and to world Jewry.

Subjects dealt with include:

- A data base on mikvaot, synagogues, and religious councils.
- Holy places.
- Religious communities throughout the world.
- Organizations and institutions.
- The bulletin of the director-general of the Ministry.

The site will be available from today, May 1, 1996 (12 Iyar 5756), the addresses being:
http://www.religinfoserv.gov.il
and
http://194.90.124.32

It is intended to expand the matters dealt with. Inquiries on this subject can be directed to the Ministry's Information Institute and Service: Tel. 02-311012/1.

Over 1,000 Burundians flee into Zaire

MORE than 1,000 Burundians fled in to eastern Zaire early yesterday after a reported Hutu rebel attack in Burundi, aid officials said.

In neighboring Tanzania, a senior government official said that up to 40 Burundian Hutus were crossing into the country daily after being forced out by the Tutsi-dominated army.

In another sign of increasing insecurity, the main highway linking Burundi's capital to much of the rest of the country was closed for a second day yesterday because of landmines laid by rebels.

In Nairobi, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali dismissed a call in Burundi for the recall of the UN special representative, Marc Faguy.

"This happened with my for-

CHRISTIAN JENNINGS
BUJUMBURA, Burundi

mer representative. Every two weeks there were demands from one group that were not happy with [him]," Boutros-Ghali told a news conference.

One of Burundi's main parties, the Tutsi-dominated Uprona party, accused Faguy of bias, but the UN chief said his man would stay so long as the government wanted him to.

Jean-Luc Siblot, Burundi chief representative for the UN World Food Program (WFP), told Reuters that 1,600 refugees had arrived by yesterday morning at Luvungi in eastern Zaire from Cibitoke in northwest Burundi.

"This is the largest number of refugees who have crossed into

Zaire since February," he added. Aid workers quoted refugees as saying they left after an attack on a military camp in Cibitoke town.

Army spokesmen were not immediately available to comment on the report that a Hutu rebel attack had triggered the exodus.

UNHCR estimated at the start of the year there were 110,000 Burundian refugees living in Zaire, also home to some one million Rwandan refugees who fled their country two years ago.

Up to one million minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates were slaughtered in Rwanda in 1994 by Hutu militias. UN officials have repeatedly warned this year that Burundi risks being plunged into similar carnage. (Reuters)

Wealthy eccentric charged at bedside in Australian massacre

HOBART, Australia (Reuters) — Australian authorities yesterday kept tight security around the man charged in connection with the massacre of 35 people, and warned an angry, grieving local community not to seek vengeance.

Australian Martin Bryant, described as a wealthy and eccentric loner, was charged at his hospital bedside with one count of murder at a tourist site in the island state of Tasmania.

Police threw a security cordon around Royal Hobart Hospital and put Bryant in an isolated section, fearing revenge attacks by angry residents after the shooting spree on Sunday when in one bloody hour 32 people were killed and 19 wounded.

The words "An eye for an eye!" were spray-painted on a hospital wall, and the hospital received threatening phone calls after Bryant was brought in on Monday.

The massacre took place at the former penal site of Port Arthur, 50 km southeast of the Tasmanian

capital Hobart.

"There has been at least one veiled threat, and this person [Bryant] may be in some danger," said Tasmanian assistant police commissioner Lippo Prins. "We are aware of the possibility of reprisal, and that's why we have taken precautions."

Bryant, 28, was formally charged with murder as he lay sedated on his stomach, during a five-minute bedside court hearing attended by a court magistrate, prosecutor and a legal aid officer. He was not required to enter a plea and was remanded to appear in a local court on May 22.

Bryant was being treated for burns to his back and buttocks received when fire gutted a cottage guest house on Sunday.

Tasmanian Police Minister John Beswick appealed for calm as the grief and shock which engulfed the 500,000 people of this remote, southerly island turned increasingly to anger.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Auschwitz initiatives proposed
WARSAW (Reuters) — An international Auschwitz committee agreed yesterday that a controversial supermarket scheme near the former death camp should be axed, but proposed that a visitors' cafeteria should be opened on the site.

News that local authorities in southern Poland had granted a developer permission to build a supermarket and fast-food restaurant in an existing building opposite the gate to the camp sparked controversy earlier this year, and the project was suspended after Poland's president and government opposed it.

The five-member presidium of the international committee overseeing the Auschwitz museum, after a one-day meeting, agreed the supermarket should be scrapped.

"But the committee advocated opening in the existing building just a food outlet for tourists and a shop for basic foodstuffs, souvenirs and informative literature," it said in a statement quoted by Poland's PAP news agency.

It said a snack-bar and car park which have long existed on the grounds of the museum should be moved out, PAP reported.

Six more killed in India election violence
NEW DELHI (AP) — At least six people were killed in political violence as candidates ended campaigning yesterday for voting in a national election this week. Two people died yesterday in a fight with rival activists using axes, machetes and sickles in a village in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

The deaths take to 43 the number of people killed in India since campaigning began one month ago.

16 dead in Mongolian fires
TERELZ, Mongolia (Reuters) — The Mongolian army fired rain-making shells into the sky yesterday, triggering snowfalls that halted a huge fire that has killed 16 people and threatened to engulf the capital, Ulan Bator.

The snowfall extinguished the blaze just 30 km from Ulan Bator, but fires elsewhere that have devastated Mongolia's forests and pastures still raged, officials said.

The fires, which have ravaged vast tracts of Mongolia's steppes, killed 11 people in recent days, raising the death toll to 16. Thirty-eight people have been seriously injured, officials said.

Sinn Fein says Adams to run in N.Irish poll
BELFAST (Reuters) — Sinn Fein, political wing of the guerrilla IRA, said yesterday that its president, Gerry Adams, would stand in Northern Ireland elections called by Britain in the run-up to June peace talks. The party ended speculation last week by announcing it would contest the May 30 poll despite charging that the vote was a British device to entrench Northern Ireland's majority Unionists, opposed to Sinn Fein's goal of a united Ireland.

Reports: Beijing bans pictures of Dalai Lama
BEIJING (AP) — Authorities in Tibet have begun banning photographs of the exiled Dalai Lama in monasteries and public places, according to reports from a monitoring group and a Tibetan newspaper.

Plainclothes police went to hotels and restaurants in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, on April 22 and 23 and ordered Tibetans to take down pictures of the Dalai Lama, the Tibet Information Network, a monitoring group based in London, said in a report yesterday.

Religious Tibetans treasure photographs of the Dalai Lama, who is revered as a god-king in Tibetan Buddhism.

The ban is another sign of tighter religious restrictions in Tibet. The monitoring group said it was the most confrontational step taken by Chinese authorities so far in a yearlong campaign to discredit the Dalai Lama.

Latest poll: Clinton has 21-point advantage
ARLINGTON, Virginia (AP) — President Clinton has his widest lead to date over Sen. Bob Dole, according to a new USA Today/CNN/Gallup Poll. The survey in yesterday's editions of the paper said if the election were held today, Clinton would beat Dole by 21 points, 58 percent to 37 percent. The margin was 17 points in a similar poll in early April. The latest USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll, conducted last weekend, questioned 827 registered voters. It has a margin of error of 4 percentage points.

French priest draws back in Holocaust row

PARIS (AP) — Rebuked by the church and scolded by anti-racism groups, France's most popular priest backed away yesterday from his support of a book that questioned aspects of the Holocaust.

"I in no way intend to question the horrible reality of the Holocaust and the millions of Jews exterminated simply

because they were Jews," Abbe Pierre said.

The statement by France's foremost defender of the poor was the latest turnaround in his position on the book by Roger Garaudy, *Founding Myths of Israeli Politics*.

The book, widely condemned as revisionist, questions the numbers of Jews killed by the Nazis. It

accuses Israel of exploiting the Holocaust for political ends.

After initially backing the book, published in January, Abbe Pierre last week apologized. On Monday, he wrote an editorial that again expressed his support. Yesterday, he again back-peddled.

"I firmly condemn all those who for diverse reasons want to deny, falsify or render banal the

Holocaust, which will forever remain a permanent stain of shame in the history of our continent," he said.

He said he was issuing the statement after a long talk with French Jewish leaders. He also retracted his earlier call for a "great debate" on aspects of the Holocaust.

In Monday's editorial in the center-left newspaper *Liberation*,

Abbe Pierre declared support for elements of Garaudy's book.

"What Garaudy wants is to situate the horror of these crimes committed by Hitler," Abbe Pierre wrote. "What does it matter, he says, to talk about six million [Jews]. In reality, 20 to 30 million humans were crushed" by the Nazis.

Study: Poets less depressed than writers

LONDON (Reuters) — Poets are crazier than authors or playwrights, but less likely to become depressed or alcoholics, a British psychiatrist reported yesterday.

It could be because of the way their imaginations work. Dr. Felix Post, who wrote the study in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, said.

Post examined the cases of 100 famous British and American writers and poets by looking at their biographies. Many good biographies, he said, provided enough detail to do an accurate psychiatric analysis.

"They've got to be really good biographies," Post, a retired psychiatric consultant, said in an interview.

He found in a previous study that writers, as a group, tended to have more mental and emotional problems than other people — politicians or scientists, for example.

But poets did not seem to follow the trend. "The poets were less unstable and had fewer depressions than the others."

Careful analysis confirmed this. The poets, including Edgar Allan Poe and Robert Graves, had more mood swings and manic depressions requiring hospitalization.

But they were less likely than the writers, who included Ernest Hemingway and Jack London, to die young or be promiscuous. Only 31 percent of the poets were alcoholics, compared to 54 percent of playwrights.

It seems writing of any sort is linked to poor mental health. Psychosis or depression was evident in 80 percent of poets, 80.5 percent of novelists and 87.5 percent of playwrights.

Post said it could be down to personality differences, or the way writers and poets work.

"I speculate that it is the imagination of novelists and playwrights, who are far more concerned with intimate human fate — they've got to identify and empathize with their characters," Post said. "They have greater stress in their writing."

As for the poets: "They don't deal with human fate. They just describe their religious feelings or their love."

Post said his study did not include women writers, as women tend to have different patterns of mental illness from men, and his study period, starting in 1840, had too few women writers.

Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael
extends heartfelt condolences to
Rachiel Rapoport
Johannesburg, South Africa
on the loss of her dear husband
SOLOMON ז"ל

To **Avi Weiss of Cleyal**
Our deep condolences on the
passing of your father
YEHUDA ז"ל
Yiftach Atir and the Evergreen Team

The Reburial in the Holy Land
of our beloved

EVA FELDENKREIS FEIG ז"ל

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We shall meet at the central parking area in
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אברהם ליבוביץ

Covenant sits on divide between old and new

THE Israeli public's sole interest in the meeting of the 21st congress of the Palestine National Council lay in whether it would purge the PLO charter of those provisions calling for armed struggle "to eliminate the Jewish entity."

The PNC did not actually amend the covenant, but merely moved toward doing so. It directed the legislative committee to prepare proposals on changing the disputed sections and to present them to a forthcoming regular meeting of the central committee.

From the Israeli and international perspective, the significance of the meeting lay entirely in how it would define future Israeli-Palestinian relations.

But this is only one side of the coin. The latest meeting of the

PNC must also be examined from the viewpoint of internal Palestinian struggles.

Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat won decisive PNC support for resolutions he wanted passed. But look at those who voted against him.

These were the heads of the old Palestinian Madrid delegation - such as Hanan Ashrawi and Haidar Abdel-Shafi - and some members of the elected PA Legislative Council.

The fact that they appeared to be a marginal minority should not mislead analysts about their real power and popular support.

Both Ashrawi and Abdel-Shafi were elected in their districts by overwhelming majorities, a true measure of grass-roots dissatisfaction with current developments.

The main opposition to Arafat in the PNC deliberations came from the leadership in the autonomous areas. Looking at the lines of dispute between them and the old PLO gives a better idea of the nature of the arguments disputing a new covenant.

The "inside" leadership chose to adhere to the declaration of the territories independence made in 1988. The old PLO preferred to keep the covenant, even if it had to be amended to conform with the Oslo accords.

The covenant is a "pure" PLO document representing traditional PLO mentality.

The declaration of independence is an eastern Jerusalem document, conceived at Orient House, begat by the intifada and given a final flourish by poet Mahmoud

ANALYSIS
PINHAS INBARI

Darwish, who lives in Tunis.

The declaration expresses the desires of territories Palestinians for a real democratic state with all the trimmings: human rights, political pluralism and more.

IN 1988, the old PLO had to yield to the demands of the intifada leadership as new realities, and the new declaration, emerged. Now these people want to return to the old world, B.I. - before intifada.

It was illuminating that no one at the PNC session mentioned the intifada as a step on the road to Palestinian self-rule.

It was clear from Arafat's speech

at the opening session that he still lives in the world of the old PLO and was not inclined to replace the anachronistic covenant with the more democratic declaration by the territories leadership.

That is why the internal leaders did not care to vote for Arafat's resolutions. The fact that some PA council members joined the leaders of the old delegation in opposing Arafat can be explained by their dissatisfaction over Arafat's attempts to absorb the new elected body into the unselected PNC - a ploy to demonstrate the superiority of the old PLO over the territories leadership.

Arafat rejected the territories leaders' demands for a more democratic regime as specified in the declaration of independence. Moreover, he appointed some of

them to posts in PLO institutions in order to create conflicts between them and their erstwhile allies and to prevent them from creating an organized opposition.

He did so by appointing a large number of "inside" figures to the new executive committee of the PLO, including Faisal Husseini, head of Orient House.

Husseini agreed to accept the offer, while Ashrawi and Abdel-Shafi refused.

This doesn't mean that these old Madrid delegates will turn against one another. It is more likely that Husseini joined Arafat's executive committee for practical considerations but will maintain his alliance with Ashrawi.

Husseini replaced Darwish, who was an old thorn in Arafat's side. Darwish finds himself closer to

Husseini and Ashrawi than to Arafat.

This indicated that the internal leadership is not without strong allies in the diaspora.

This internal dispute may indeed affect the PLO's obligation under Oslo to change the covenant as the old PLO may persist in trying to stick as closely as acceptable to the old formulations.

Their view would be that deep cuts in the old document would gut it beyond repair and make it inevitable that it would be superseded by one based on the declaration of independence.

So, the struggle over the Palestinian covenant is not merely about amending it to harmonize with the agreements with Israel.

It is also about shaping the face of the future Palestine.

Turkey fascinated by Israel Air Force

JAY BUSHINSKY

A MEMBER of the IDF spokesman's office in Tel Aviv has predicted unequivocally, "Maj.-Gen. Herzl Bodinger will go to Turkey, possibly for the next series of aerial maneuvers there."

His Turkish counterparts undoubtedly will be eager to debrief the OC Air Force on professional aspects of the IAF, including the - not-always successful - attempts to keep its anti-Hizbullah air strikes as surgical as possible.

"Turkey always has been fascinated by Israel's military experience," said Ambassador Barlas Ozener. "We don't want to deal with Israel behind closed doors any more." That means that Bodinger's Turkish hosts will be able to debrief him on the sophisticated tactics used by the IAF during Operation Grapes of Wrath to whatever extent that Israeli military secrecy permits.

Interviewed at the embassy's handsome new quarters in Tel Aviv, Ozener attributed the multifaceted military agreement between Jerusalem and Ankara to the upgrading of diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level four years ago.

He said Turkish and Israeli pilots "flew together here and there." Israeli naval vessels visited Turkish ports and "several" Turkish officers "came to see Israel's high-tech" equipment. Israel lacks airspace, he says, "and we have plenty of it."

However, he explained that IAF pilots do not have bed-down rights on Turkish soil, meaning that they do not have the same access to Turkish Air Force bases enjoyed by US pilots.

Nor has Turkey agreed to the pre-positioning of Israeli military equipment, he went on, implying that Turkey cannot be used by Israel as a springboard for tactical operations against hostile states.

His comments about Turkey's recent difficulties with its southern neighbor, Syria, were especially interesting. It could be assumed that Damascus' sympathy with and support for the Kurdish separatist PKK, which the Turks regard as a "terrorist" and "Marxist" outfit, may have been a catalyst that facilitated Ankara's rapprochement with Israel.

"We know that the head of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, lives in

Damascus," the ambassador said. "We know his address and telephone number. We know the nightclubs he patronizes. Turkish journalists have gone to Syria to interview him, and German members of the Bundestag have visited him there."

DESPITE THESE facts, the Syrians deny Ocalan's presence. This attitude is reminiscent of Damascus' persistent denials that Alois Brunner, the fugitive Nazi SS concentration camp commandant, has been living in Damascus as "Dr. Georg Fischer" since 1959, despite his having been interviewed there by German journalists.

Ozener implied that Syrian dissatisfaction with the amount of Euphrates River water allocated to Turkey since the construction of the Ataturk Dam led to Damascus' alleged collusion with the PKK. "It's blackmail," the ambassador said.

His dismissal of Arab protests against the military cooperation agreement with Israel was equally pointed. "We object to people whose governments made peace with Israel describing it as the 'Arab world's greatest enemy' or inferring that Turkey is engaged in nefarious 'plots' with Israel."

The most plausible explanation for the displeasure expressed by Egypt at the Turkish-Israeli military liaison lay in Cairo's apparent belief that while Israel's existence must be recognized and accepted it also must be kept "at bay" and not be allowed to project itself into the Middle Eastern context.

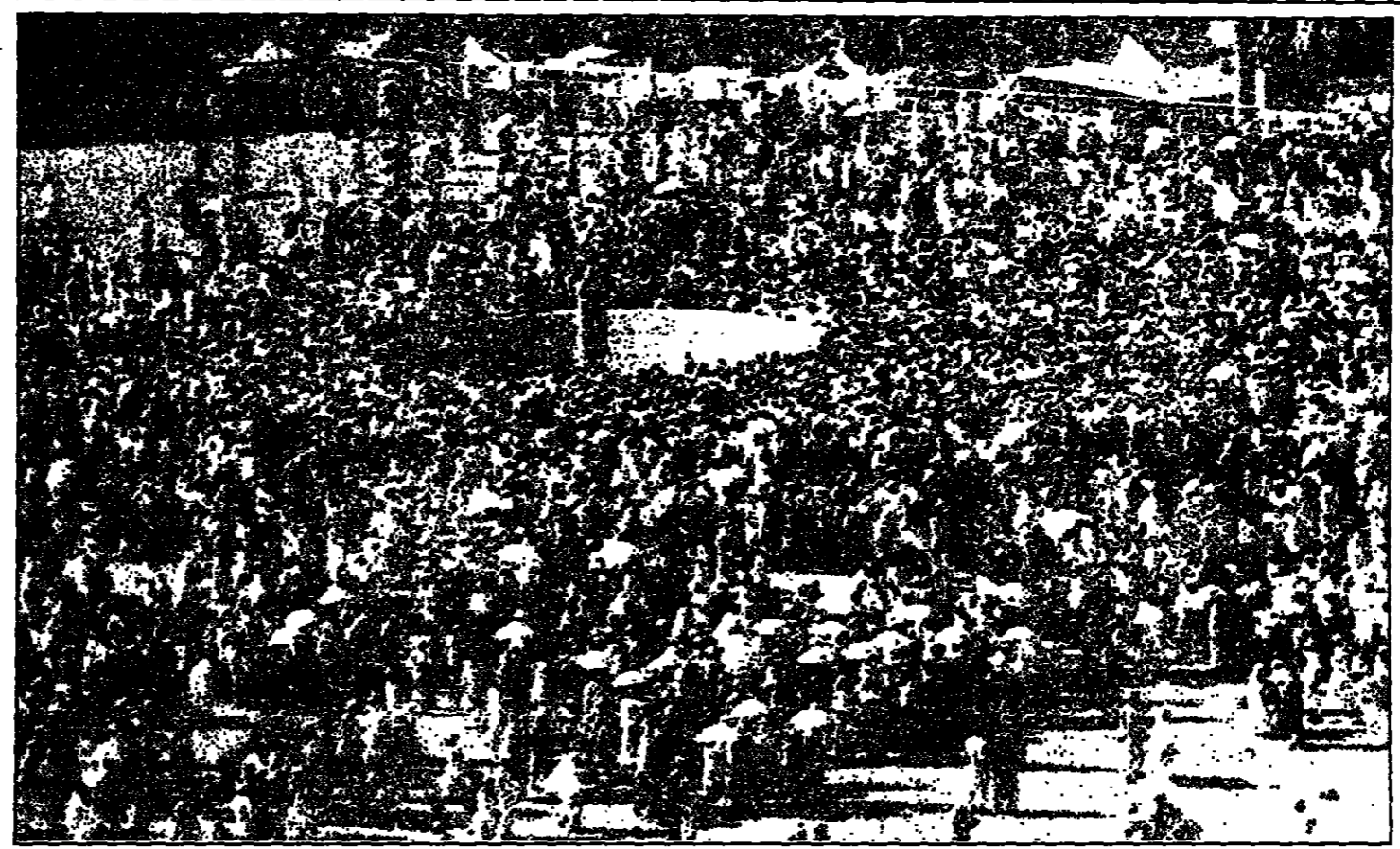
He contended that Turkey and Israel are natural partners because they are the "only two democracies" in the region and assailed the Arab leadership's "fear of ideas."

"When you open borders, ideas enter," he said.

The ambassador is scornful about Iran's objections to the Turkish-Israeli entente. "Teheran would protest anything that indicates good relations with Israel," he said.

Bearing all this in mind, Maj.-Gen. Bodinger's trip to Turkey is appropriate.

It could help stabilize the regional balance of power and reinforce the fact that states whose heritage is Islamic can and do maintain normal, mutually beneficial ties with Israel.



In Mecca, some of the 2 million Moslem pilgrims walk towards mass prayers at the Grand Mosque Monday after descending from Mount Arafat. Saudi officials said on television that the haj was so far trouble-free. (Reuters)

Saudis ease Bahrain squeeze

SAUDI Arabia has decided to give Bahrain all the revenue from a shared oil field to help the Gulf island out of a tight spot as its economy feels the pinch from more than a year of antigovernment unrest, analysts say.

But some Gulf analysts think there are strings attached to the gift which will bind Bahrain more closely to its neighbor, the world's biggest oil producer.

A senior Gulf oil source described the decision as having "profound political implications."

"It effectively makes Bahrain a surrogate province of Saudi Arabia. It means that Bahrain may find it difficult to carry out liberal reforms on the political front if it wanted to," he said. "It ties Bahrain to its neighbor."

Since April 1, all the revenue from the Abu Saafa offshore field has been going to Bahrain, providing an estimated extra 80 million dinars (\$200 million) a year of oil revenue, based on a conservative price estimate of \$13 to \$14 a barrel.

Previously, Saudi Arabia received revenue from 40,000 barrels per day of the output while Bahrain got 100,000 bpd from the field, operated by Saudi state-owned oil firm Saudi Aramco.

The extra money could not come at a better time for Bahrain, which is wrestling with a stubborn budget deficit while paying the cost of ongoing civil disturbances sparked in part by unemployment among the island's Shi'ite majority.

Saudi Arabia has pledged to stand by Bahrain since unrest flared in December 1994 among Bahrainis who are asking for restoration of parliament by the Sunni-dominated government.

At least 24 people have been killed in the unrest, which has hit Bahrain's retail sector but so far has not prompted a cash flight to safer havens, economists say.

Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), an economic and military alliance.

The increased oil aid, renewable annually, would boost the share of Bahrain government revenue by income from Abu Saafa.

Analysts say it is in Saudi's interests to ensure Bahrain has the financial means to end simmering unrest rather than ceding political ground which could provoke calls for reform in the kingdom itself.

Saudi Arabia has a large Shi'ite community in the east, linked to Bahrain by a 25-kilometer causeway. There's no such thing as a free lunch," said a senior Arab economist. (Reuters)

Moslems to meet in Egypt to discuss terrorism

NEWS AGENCIES
CAIRO

ISLAMIC theologians, Middle East experts and ministers of religious affairs from the Moslem world will meet in Cairo in July to discuss how to confront "terrorism," the government newspaper *Al-Akhabar* said this week.

Mohammad al-Fayoumi, an official at the Ministry of Religious Endowments, said the meeting would discuss "the international phenomenon of terrorism and the response of Islam and heavenly religions to intellectual extremism."

Fayoumi said delegates were expected from 200 countries and religious institutions. Among those attending from non-Islamic countries was former West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

The conference is due to last three days from July 24.

Egyptian Moslem militants have waged a four-year campaign of violence to overthrow the government of President Hosni Mubarak and establish a strict Islamic state.

In Saudi Arabia, Interior Minister Prince Nayef said the oil giant was still vulnerable to political violence such as last year's bombing of a US-run military training center which killed seven people.

"What happened could happen again, on a smaller or bigger scale," he said in a speech to senior security officials broadcast on Saudi TV this week. "This happens everywhere in the world. Our duty is to prepare for it."

The November 13 bombing at the Saudi National Guard training centre in Riyadh shattered the myth that Saudi Arabia was

immune to the political violence that has rattled other Middle Eastern countries.

It was the worst blast involving Americans in the Middle East since the 1983 Beirut bombing killed 241 US servicemen.

A week ago, four Saudis confessed on state TV to the car bombing and said they had been planning further attacks.

In confessions broadcast shortly after Prince Nayef announced their arrest, the four said they were influenced by Islamic groups outside the kingdom, including Britain-based dissident Mohammad al-Masari. He denied influencing them.

Prince Nayef told security officials that they should continue combating the threat of violence. "What is asked of you is not temporary. It is continuing," he said.

He also urged scholars, writers and officials to prevent radical ideology from influencing Saudis.

MEANWHILE, THE annual pilgrimage to Mecca drew to a close as up to 2 million Moslems stoned monuments representing the devil and slaughtered sheep, goats, camels or cows.

Many pilgrims also flocked to the Grand Mosque to usher in the first day of Eid al-Adha, the Feast of Sacrifice, which commemorates Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son for God.

Authorities have reported no dis-

turbances and remained silent on reports that tens of thousands of Iranian and other pilgrims defied a Saudi ban and held a rally to demonstrate their hatred for the US and Israel.

Live coverage by Saudi TV showed hundreds of thousands of worshippers, barefoot and clad in seamless white garb, praying at the Grand Mosque, which houses the Kaaba. "There will be no good, glory or happiness for humanity except through Islam," said Sheikh Abdul-Rahman al-Sidees, the Grand Mosque's preacher.

In an emotion-charged sermon, he delivered scathing attacks on Israel, Western media and groups advocating women's rights.

He described as "charlatans" and "defeatists" Moslem clergymen and scholars taking part in debates aimed at bringing closer together the followers of the world's different religions.

"There will be no bargaining as far as our faith is concerned or surrender of our principles," he said. "What is right will always be right and what is infidelity will always be infidelity."

The haj season peaked with the pilgrims praying and chanting on

Mount Arafat, near Mecca, where the prophet Mohammed, founder of the Moslem faith, delivered his last sermon shortly before his death in 632.

The symbolic stoning of the devil at monuments in the plains of Mina outside Mecca, Mohammed's birthplace, followed as temperatures soared to 40°.

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, prides itself on being the birthplace of Islam and playing host to pilgrims.

It spends millions of dollars every year to build new roads, improve accommodations and expand the capacity of the holy shrines in Mecca and Medina, where Mohammed is buried.

It routinely drafts thousands of policemen, civil defense personnel and medical teams to ensure a trouble-free haj.

King Fahd, Saudi Arabia's ailing monarch, made a rare public appearance at Mina "to see for himself" the facilities offered to the pilgrims.

At least 2,000 pilgrims have been killed in stampedes, fires and clashes in the past 10 years. More than 400 Iranians lost their lives in 1987, when Saudi security forces moved to break a "disavowal of the infidels" rally held by Iranian pilgrims.

US says Iran is building missile tunnels

IRAN is building tunnels along its Persian Gulf coastline, apparently as protective storage sites for ballistic missiles, a US official said this week.

Navy Capt. Mark D. Neuhart, spokesman for the US Central Command, which is responsible for US military operations in the Middle East, confirmed a report by London-based *Jane's Defence Weekly* on the discovery of the tunneling.

In this week's edition, *Jane's* quoted Gen. Binford Peay, commander-in-chief of Central Command, as saying the US had "just uncovered" evidence that Iran has been "doing a lot of tunneling" near its southern coastline.

Neuhart said there was not yet any evidence of missiles present in the tunnels. He said that Iran's intentions were unclear but that the tunnels appeared to be designed for protective warehousing of missiles rather than as launch sites.

Neuhart called the project part of Iran's defense modernization effort.

Asked about the reported tunneling, US Defense Secretary William Perry declined to confirm or deny it.

"I will say that we take very seriously the fact that Iran already has short-range ballistic missiles and already poses a threat with those ... and we believe that they are trying to develop long-range ballistic missiles," Perry said at a

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Clinton versus the professors

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton's open endorsement of Prime Minister Shimon Peres for the premiership is not the first time the US administration has intervened in Israeli politics. Four years ago the Bush administration made brutally clear its preference for the Labor Party led by Yitzhak Rabin over Yitzhak Shamir and the Likud. By conditioning its assent to guarantee bank loans for Israel on Jerusalem's settlement policies, it in effect told Israelis that voting for Shamir would mean the loss of \$10 billion in guaranteed loans. There is little doubt the warning made a difference in the elections.

The reason for the American preference is hardly a mystery. The Labor government is the first since 1967 to follow the American prescription for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Washington has always postulated that peace with the Palestinians can be achieved if Israel retreats to the 1949 armistice lines, allows the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories Israel won in the 1967 war, and reaches a compromise over Jerusalem.

It now also believes that Israel can have peace with Syria - and consequently with the whole Arab world - if it relinquishes the Golan. Peres, who agrees with this assessment, is willing to make the necessary territorial concessions it dictates. Linyamin Netanyahu and the Likud, on the other hand, reject the American blueprint as an invitation to war.

To say that there is something offensive about foreign interference in the domestic affairs of a democracy is to state the obvious. But the US and Israel have had a special relationship from the time of the state's inception. It would be unreasonable to expect the American president to have an "arm's length" attitude at election time.

Nor is the "interference" purely one-sided. Peres's obvious preference for Clinton over Republican candidate Bob Dole can do Clinton no harm. Although a majority of American Jews usually vote for the Democratic candidate anyway, the enthusiastic endorsement by Israel's premier will most likely give Clinton additional votes and financial support in November.

But while Clinton's eagerness to join Peres's cheering section is understandable, his announcement that Yasser Arafat has canceled the PLO Covenant is not. One should like to hope that the American president has sufficiently reliable sources of information at his disposal to prevent his lending the prestige of his office to a hoax even if it is in the service of a friend's election campaign.

The PLO Covenant has been neither canceled nor changed. A secret resolution on the issue was passed last Wednesday at the Palestinian National Council meeting. All that is known

about it is that it ordered a judicial committee to propose changes in the clauses that are incompatible with the letters Arafat sent to Yitzhak Rabin in September of 1993. Nothing has been said about which clauses should be changed and how.

A shocking revelation on this issue was made yesterday by the army chief of intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, who told the Knesset Foreign and Security Affairs Committee that the PLO was still working on the formulation of the resolution on the covenant. The government, obviously dissatisfied with the language of the resolution, is now trying to get Yasser Arafat to change it retroactively. This must be the first time in history that a parliamentary resolution is being altered after it has been passed; let alone a resolution described by Israel's prime minister as the most important event in the Middle East in the past hundred years.

Unfortunately, Clinton's announcement that the covenant has been abolished, and his meeting with Arafat as a reward for this purported cancellation, will only serve to perpetuate the hoax. The public is more likely to heed the words of the president than the observations of such prominent experts on the subject as Prof. Yehoshua Porat and Prof. Haim Shaked who yesterday announced their support for Netanyahu. But chances are their assessment of the PNC's actions is closer to the truth.

What particularly irritated them about Peres's conduct was "the brazen attempt to dupe the public with the lie that the PNC had scrapped anti-Israeli clauses from its charter." As Shaked put it, "The PNC nullified nothing and we have no idea with what they will replace whatever they may in future erase from their covenant - if anything at all."

Even more fundamental than their objection to the covenant hoax is their reservation about the whole concept behind the Oslo agreements. "The entire Oslo process is based on a misconception," Shaked said, "because it assumes that the Arab mainstream and intelligentsia have relinquished their historical struggle against Zionism and are where France and Germany were after World War II. Our reality is more like after World War I, when no one could foresee that the 'peace to end all wars' would in two decades erupt into the most terrible war the world had ever known... Instead of Utopian vision we need utmost care, and I find the Peres government frighteningly reckless. I am speaking in my field of expertise and feel that I cannot with a clean conscience remain silent."

These are not the kind of comments the public likes to hear, particularly during an election campaign. But Israel can ignore them only at its peril.



Grapes but no wine

Israel and the US stood alone in the UN General Assembly during the vote on the one-sided resolution condemning Israel for the artillery attacks on Lebanon. Only the US supported Israel's right to self-defense, as enjoyed by all countries. The Clinton administration lived up to its principles even before the "Christopher letter" delivered to Israel as an appendix to the Israeli-Lebanese understanding not to attack civilians in the military conflict in South Lebanon. This "understanding" has been inaccurately described as a cease-fire agreement.

It is true that many countries exchanged between Hizbullah's Katyushas and IDF shells, but an overwhelming majority did not raise a hand against the terrorist Katyushas which caused the last outbreak of hostilities. Israel's ambassador to the UN can take comfort in the fact that more countries abstained in the vote on the resolution condemning Israel than voted for it. But in the course of time the exact statistics of the voting will be forgotten and what will remain in the UN files is a resolution condemning Israel and calling for its immediate withdrawal from South Lebanon, while emphasizing Lebanon's right to reparations.

Israel's inherent right to defend itself and its army does not need letters of endorsement from other countries, but when a country like the US, with its economic interests in the Arab states, stands alone in the UN against all Israel's enemies - as they attempt to deny Israel the rights of every other member state of the UN - it has special importance. But in order to make things easier for the US, Israel should not display the letter affirming Israel's right of self-defense as one of the achievements of Operation Grapes of Wrath. The letter does not form a departure from the US's long-standing policy.

In general, it is better to avoid exaggerated assessments of diplomatic procedures. The Casablanca conference was not Israel's greatest

MOSHE ZAK

achievement since the founding of the state, as Prime Minister Peres tried to claim. The decision of the Palestinian National Council to authorize the legal committee of the PLO to investigate how to revise the clauses of the Palestinian Covenant that are incompatible with Arafat's commitments to Israel is not the most important event of the century, as Peres described it. The same applies to Christopher's document of understanding.

Israel's right to self-defense needs neither US authorization nor multinational supervision

standing, which is not a "revolutionary step." Superlatives should be left for truly dramatic developments, and the results of Operation Grapes of Wrath should be judged from a realistic point of view. • Would we have started Operation Grapes of Wrath if we had known that the result would be limited to a US endorsement of our inherent right to self-defense? The answer would be no, for even before the operation the US did not question this right. The thousands of shells we fired on Lebanon over 16 days, without asking the US's permission, are evidence. • Would we have started the operation, which caused so much suffering to the population in the North, if we had known that, when it was over, Hizbullah would still have the option to open fire on our forces in the security zone (according to the "understanding") or to open fire on civilians whenever the terrorists decide (contrary to the understanding)? The answer is no. • Would we have supported the

operation if we had known in advance what the prime minister said in Washington this week, that the quiet on the border depends on the results of diplomatic negotiations? Even members of the government would have dissociated themselves from Peres's statement that the "understanding" will last at least until the elections, but after the elections there may be trouble, if the diplomatic negotiations do not progress.

IN OTHER words the quiet on the northern border on which so much effort was expended is highly temporary and Syria is likely to break it, or at least threaten to break it, in order to extract political concessions.

The presupposition of the operation, that thousands of refugees from South Lebanon in Beirut would force Assad to open negotiations for a cease-fire, did not stand the test of time. Assad did not turn a hair at the suffering of the refugees, but as soon as Peres warned him of the prospect of a land-based IDF operation in Lebanon, which would have drawn the Syrian army into the conflict, Assad gave up his attempt to derail the understanding which the Americans had drawn up with the agreement of both sides.

Israel's statements that it is possible that "exchanges of fire on the northern border will start up again if there is no progress in the diplomatic negotiations with Syria after the Knesset elections, are understood in Syria as signs of weakness from Jerusalem. Because of these signals of weakness we had to bear the weight of Operation Grapes of Wrath. Anyone who is concerned to retain quiet on the northern front must preserve the correct proportions of shells and words. Shelling should not be overdone and self-praise for achievement should not be exaggerated.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MISREPRESENTING PERES

Sir, - In your editorial of April 9, "Peres's invidious comparison," you accuse Prime Minister Peres of asking the electorate to believe "that the Likud, like Iran and its proteges, wants the collapse of the peace process."

If your editorialist had taken the trouble to read your news and feature columns, he would have seen that your own paper has not reported any such charge. In the full-page interview with Mr. Peres facing the editorial, all he says is that the Iranians "want to unset a government of peace" - not a war against the Likud.

According to David Makovsky, in your issue of April 2, Peres "believes that raids into Palestinian cities" (which, of course, would be the inevitable consequence of Netanyahu's declared policy of resuming sole Israeli responsibility for security in Judea, Samaria and Gaza), "coupled with the expansion of settlements, would bring about the collapse of the peace process." A similar view is expressed in your issue of April 8.

Peres's opinions could, of course, be contradicted, but they are fully confirmed by Abba Eban's quotations

from the interview with Netanyahu in *Ha'aretz* of March 29 (as reported in your issue of April 9 on the same page as your editorial), in which he scoffs at "the peace process."

He seems to believe that he can achieve peace while refusing to shake Arafat's hand, withdrawing the Palestinians' control of security in the autonomous areas, and "[establishing] more settlements in the territories from which Israeli forces have withdrawn."

All Peres is saying is that the Likud leader's avowed policies would, in his opinion, lead to the collapse of the peace process.

This development would obviously serve the interests of Iran and Hamas, for it would signify the complete failure of Arafat's policies and result in massive Palestinian support for Hamas.

To sum up, your editorial shamefully misrepresents Prime Minister Peres's views as expressed in your own paper.

MISHA LOUVISH
Jerusalem.

Or as uttered on *Mabat*? - Ed.
J.P.

VALUABLE ARTICLES

Sir, - Left-wing Israeli readers still have not resigned themselves to the fact that Israel's only English-language daily is no longer under the strict control of the left - as it was for decades. In a futile attempt to discredit its editorial policy, they have leveled charges of imbalance in the choice of polemical articles. The facts prove otherwise. This is particularly evident in the *Letters to the Editor* section, which in the past refrained from publishing what it termed "poison pen" critical letters.

Lately these readers' strategy has apparently changed. They have begun to target specific columns, witness their carping at the invaluable *Eye on the Media* feature. If they are self-respecting Israelis, they should instead express their admiration and gratitude to Mr. Bar-Ilan for his persistence in bringing to light the blatant one-sided approach of Israeli-

bashers throughout the Western media. The very fact that many of the offenders find it necessary to react to his column's criticisms indicates their sensitivity to being monitored, and, in the long run, has proved to be effective. It also reminds Israeli readers, whose memory unfortunately requires jogging from time to time, of the degree of "affection" with which Jews and Israel are still held in so many influential sectors throughout the world.

Another column recently targeted has been Moshe Kohn's erudite, informative and delightfully written weekly feature. One writer characterized his style as "pompous." I wonder whether the writer would apply the same label to articles penned by Abba Eban, with whose views he probably identifies.

MENACHEM BLOCH
Givatayim.

DEATH AT CONVENT

Sir, - We refer to the Reuter news report in your April 28 issue, "Priest found dead in Holy Sepulchre Church," and the AP report on April 29, "Autopsy reveals priest died of gluttony."

Since the two news reports caused some consternation in our communities, we feel the need to note that the reports contain gross pieces of misinformation. We would like to clarify that Claudio Mateo Medina, 34 years old, was a student in our seminary in Jerusalem, but he left for good last year. He was not a Franciscan friar, he was not a priest, and he returned to Israel for a four- or five-day visit for reasons we do not know. He was at the Holy Sepulchre Franciscan Convent having requested to be accommodated for one night as he was to return to Tel Aviv the following day. As to the cause of death, we leave it to the competent authorities.

FR. CLAUDIO BARRATTO, OFM
Spokesman,
Custody of the Holy Land
Jerusalem.

TRAFFIC DEATHS

Sir, - How many more beautiful little girls like Karen Ben-Shoshan will be seriously injured or worse on pedestrian crossings? What good did the massive campaign "Sign for life" do in educating drivers and pedestrians to use crossing correctly? What kind of a person willfully drives over a crossing whilst other cars are stationary, allowing children access to their school?

Until adequate punishment is meted out to these potential killers on our roads and police presence backed by electronic devices is increased, the lives of our children and elderly are at risk daily. Approximately half of all road deaths occur in towns and Israel is the only country in the Western world where for the past four years deaths are on the increase.

ZELDA HARRIS,
Spokesperson, Metuna
Netanya.

Katyushas on Western capitals?

How many years or months will it take before the first Katyushas land on a Western city?

At a time when nuclear bombs may end up in the wrong hands, access to Katyushas is also becoming easier. The mini-rockets are cheap, easy and fast to operate, and difficult to detect. For the operator they have the advantage over homemade bombs that they are unlikely to explode together with their maker.

There are many people in the world who have violent objections to one aspect or another of Western society. Terrorists want to identify society's soft spots and find diverse or more effective methods for attacking them, thus forcing governments to spend more on police and equipment in cumbersome efforts to protect citizens. Katyushas fit this bill better than any other alternative. While terrorists start from perverse assumptions, their further reasoning is not necessarily illogical.

History supports the forecast that Western cities will become targets of Katyushas. After the Six Day War, El Al planes and other Israeli targets abroad were bombed or shot at by Palestinian terrorists. It was only when Western targets were attacked that it slowly became clear that Israelis had been the first victims of a more general phenomenon: criminal outsiders trying to exploit the vulnerability of modern society for their ideological purposes.

Unwillingness to act strongly against foreign terrorists and a lack of understanding of the issues at stake has forced the West to subject all air travelers to increased security measures. Today an entire generation barely realizes that the Wright brothers did not have to pass through a metal detector before making their first flight. Such equipment is now as normal at airports as check-in counters.

In the recent past, Algerian terrorists planted bombs on underground trains in Paris after this

MANFRED GERSTENFELD

method had been shown to be numerous on Israeli buses. Few Americans thought, when they saw TV pictures of vehicles which had exploded next to Jewish buildings in Argentina, that it could also happen in Oklahoma City for reasons totally unrelated to Middle Eastern conflicts.

ONCE terrorists have laid hands on the projectiles, it isn't a great

The world's media coverage has given these rockets free publicity

problem to smuggle them into Western countries. Many illegal immigrants cross Western borders every day. Katyushas are small, do not need air to breathe, and are easy to smuggle in.

One can further predict the most probable Western targets for Katyushas by asking where they would create the maximum fear for the minimum investment. The larger the urban area, the more densely

it is built-up, the greater the probability that one will hit something.

It is easy to transport Katyushas to discreet spots near major cities. This makes large capitals much surer targets than minor towns. Whenever one writes about terrorism, one has to be prudent, so as not to give terrorists additional ideas. But now there is no such preoccupation. In the past few weeks the world media have run a de facto - a massive campaign which promotes Katyushas use, providing a crash course and stimulus for terrorists looking for ideas. Even the world's largest corporations could not afford to pay for the publicity that Katyushas have received free of charge.

In this context, one of the last things any Westerner should do is start criticizing Israel for the Kana accident. For the West, the main issue of regret is that more demonstrations that terrorism does not pay are so badly needed.

Western criticism of Israel, though more moderate than in the past, is likely to prove counterproductive once again. All the West has accomplished is to increase the probability that it will itself be on the receiving end of the rockets at a future date.

The writer is an international business strategist and author of *Israel's New Future - Interviews*.

POSTSCRIPT

A BRAZILIAN surgeon shot an anesthesiologist to death in the operating room while a patient and fellow doctors looked on in horror.

Marcelino Pereira da Silva, 60, stormed into an operating room in a hospital in Macae and fired three shots into Emilson Ribeiro Elias, 44.

Da Silva was apparently jealous over Elias's probable ap-

pointment as director of the hospital.

Elias was treating a patient for the removal of an appendix when he telephoned. Da Silva asked him to bring additional medical equipment. Da Silva showed up with a handgun, shot Elias and fled.

The patient, who was under local anesthesia, was in a "state of shock" following the incident. Another doctor was called in to finish the operation.

Litmus test

TOM GROSS

Homosexuals have traditionally been discriminated against almost everywhere, but today attitudes toward them are increasingly seen as one of the key tests by which we can judge how tolerant and progressive a society is.

The recent decision by the annual convention of American Reform rabbis (representing 1.4 million American Jews) to support single-sex weddings will be seen by liberal-minded people as a welcome development.

Israel, too, scores high marks in this area. It now offers one of the most liberal legal environments for homosexuals in the world. While still trailing behind the pacesetters - Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary and the Netherlands - it is now ahead of other Western countries such as the US, Britain, and Italy.

The Knesset decriminalized homosexuality in Israel in 1988, and outlawed all discrimination against gays in the workplace in 1992. The Supreme Court has further advanced employment rights for homosexuals, as a result of which employers like El Al and Tel Aviv University have granted full benefits to the partners of their gay employees.

Last year saw a number of other moves towards full equality. The Interior Ministry approved the registration of same-sex partners under one family name, and gay men and lesbians identifying themselves as belonging to a couple maintaining a common household were officially counted as spouses in the national census.

In the military, British and American gays look to the Israeli example, the IDF having granted homosexuals full equality. By contrast, in the Arab world homosexuals enjoy no rights and anti-gay violence is common. Punishments in Iran for homosexual activity range from 74 lashes to death and there have been unconfirmed reports of summary executions by armed

Tolerant societies don't discriminate against gays

gangs in the Palestinian-administered territories.

YET in spite of the advances, a good deal of prejudice still exists in this country, and gays here feel they need to maintain a low profile.

This is partly because this is such a small country and any prejudiced gossip travels fast.

It is also because the haredim are incapable of dealing with this entire category of people except in the most rigid theological terms. Last year, Shas MK Rabbi Moshe Marjia implied in the Knesset that the Jewish penalty for homosexual sex is death.

But the most important factor liable to prevent us from keeping up with the most progressive states is that we remain a country deeply committed to (heterosexual) marriage, an institution which in other Western countries is on the wane (over one-third of babies in France and Britain are now born out of wedlock; in Iceland and Sweden the figure is almost 60 percent).

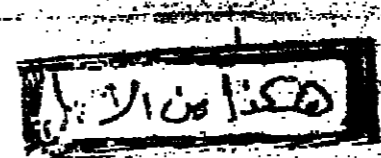
AS LONG as marriage itself continues to exist in its present form, there's no reason why homosexual partners shouldn't enjoy the same rights as heterosexual ones. Homosexuals need emotional and economic stability no less than heterosexuals. Those gays who want to consummate their relationship through a marriage service with rabbi and family, should be allowed to do so.

This is precisely what's happening in the US, where there are more than 50 gay synagogues. One in New York regularly attracts over 1,500 congregants, and the synagogue's female rabbi has officiated many marriages. Although these aren't yet legally binding, following a court decision in Hawaii, they may soon become so.

In this country, the issue of same-sex marriage comes within the wider issue of civil marriage, which remains in the grip of the rabbinical courts.

It's a great pity that both marriage reform and homosexual rights are not more prominent election issues. To support homosexual rights doesn't necessarily mean endorsing the tactics of radical gay protest groups but, as a litmus test of liberalism, those rights ought to be of concern to all of us, not just to gays themselves.

The writer works for The Jerusalem Post.



JERRY Siegel's greatest creation has become perhaps the best known symbol of *tikkun olam* (putting the world to rights) in 20th-century popular culture: Superman.

Siegel, a teenaged budding science-fiction writer from Cleveland when he invented the Man of Steel in the late 1930s, died this year at the age of 81.

Colleagues and admirers agree that his invention of the blue-and-red garbed hero who epitomizes the continuing fight for truth and justice revolutionized not only the comic-book industry but world mythology. And Jewish cultural observers note that the Superman legend seems to resonate with Jewish themes.

How else to explain the story of Kal-el (a curiously Hebraic-sounding name), who is forced to leave the planet of his birth after its destruction? And when the stranger arrives in a foreign land, he must keep his true identity a secret, masquerading as mild-mannered Clark Kent, who hides beneath a felt hat and glasses.

"The older I got, the more I saw there was something profoundly Jewish to Superman, that is somehow was one of us," says Daniel Schiffin, communications director of the US's National Foundation for Jewish Culture. "Underneath the glasses and timidity there lurks a great strength that just needs to be let out. Like Clark Kent, we've been Diaspora Jews for so long, being viewed as timid and bookish, when underneath there are fierce Hebrew warriors doing God's work."

Schiffin also observes that Superman was born at a time of economic despair and racism (the Depression and World War II), a time of special trepidation for Jews worldwide.

"There was a pervasive sense that Jews were somehow weak in some way - that was how others saw them in Europe and in the States," Schiffin says. "In a way, Superman was a countermeasure or a reaction formation to that sense of themselves."

Siegel's widow, Joanne Carter Siegel - the original model for Lois Lane - told *The Jewish Week* that her husband never really talked about the possible Jewish roots of the Man of Tomorrow.

"I've heard about that [Jewish connection] before. I've been told that Kal-el in Hebrew means God," she said during a telephone interview from her California home. "As a child, he [Siegel] heard the [Hebrew] language. I don't know whether it was conscious; it may have been coming out of his subconscious mind." But she added, "It's nice of [some people] to think that way. I don't think he would

Superman: A Jewish hero

A Jewish understanding of the world underlies the work of Jerry Siegel, Eric J. Greenberg reports

have been offended."

However, Leon Wieseltier, literary editor of *The New Republic*, counters: "If Superman is an American Jewish fantasy, it's the fantasy of escaping from identity. An encounter with his origins makes him weak, almost to death," he says, apparently referring to the deadly metal kryptonite.

"Second, he has it bad for a woman like Lois Lane. And third, he thinks justice will be brought about by the unprecedented use of physical force. I think he is a perfect symbol of what ails the American Jew," the noted critic says.

Paul Levitz, publisher of DC Comics (a subsidiary of Warner Communications) and former Superman scriptwriter, says he also has heard the stories of Superman's Jewish origins, but has never been able to confirm them.

"I never heard Jerry talk about that theory," he says. But according to Levitz, 39, a Jewish subtext in comic books wouldn't be unusual, especially since the comic-book business was largely created by American Jews in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

"There was a really high percentage of Jewish writers and artists, and for whatever reason there was a great outpouring of passion. It's something we as a people should be proud of," he says.

SIEGEL could be described as the Abraham of the comic-book industry.

"You might say that Jerry is the father of us all. He started the superhero business," says Stan Lee, who two decades later founded Marvel Comics and created Spiderman.

"Without the Superman concept, I don't think comics would have lasted," notes former DC Comics editor Julie Schwartz, who helped revive the superhero industry in the

early 1960s.

Schwartz, who met Siegel in 1952, recalls the several draft versions of *Superman* that Siegel was working on, but could never get Siegel to reveal the origin of the name Kal-el.

Even if Superman may not be "Jewish," Siegel and his cocreator, childhood friend Joe Shuster, have earned their place in Jewish history. According to the book *The Jewish 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Jews of All Time*, the dynamic duo of Siegel and Shuster are listed at No. 100, not far behind Steven Spielberg (97) Menachem Begin (75) and Henry Kissinger (79). Moses was No. 1 and Maimonides No. 16.

Levitz says Siegel attained "the rarest of literary achievements, creating a character that transcends the medium in which the story is told." Indeed Superman has been wildly popular in every entertainment medium to feature him, from comic books, newspaper comic strips, radio serials, theatrical cartoons, movie serials, TV cartoons, Broadway musicals, television shows (including the classic 1950s *The Adventures of Superman* with George Reeves and today's *Lois and Clark*) and four feature movies starring Christopher Reeve.

All this from humble beginnings: Siegel and Shuster couldn't find a publisher for nearly four years.

IT WAS somewhere between late 1935 and 1937 that the teenage Siegel, a scrawny, bespectacled graduate of Glenville High School, dreamed up the story of Superman, rocketed by his parents from the doomed planet Krypton to Earth, where he gained superhuman abilities like Samsonian strength, X-ray vision, super speed, heat vision and invulnerability.

At the time, Joanne Carter was a 15-year-old aspiring model. She answered a modeling ad in

the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* placed by teenage artist Joe Shuster. Almost as fast as a speeding bullet, she became the prototype for Lois Lane.

"I had wavy, shoulder-length hair. They wanted a wholesome Lois Lane," she says. She married Siegel nearly 10 years later.

Joanne Siegel says it's hard to pin down the exact year Siegel finalized the concept of Superman, and she hopes to research the subject for a book. An early incarnation had Superman as a bald-headed evil scientist who looked suspiciously like arch villain Lex Luthor.

After shopping around the character for nearly four years, DC Comics, then known as National Allied Periodicals, agreed to publish an adventure of the world's first superhero in *Action Comics* No. 1, dated June 1938. (An original copy recently sold for \$137,500.) The success of the character with the large red S on his chest was, well, more powerful than a locomotive.

The rest of the supporting cast also was solid as steel: gruff newspaper editor Perry White, cub reporter Jimmy Olsen and hard-nosed investigative reporter Lois Lane, a mentor for untold numbers of young American girls.

Current *Superman* comic writer Dan Jurgens says the creation of Lois Lane rivals Siegel's star creation: "Jerry created the first great feminist. She was a model for feminism, and female careers ended up being shaped by Lois Lane."

Joanne Siegel refutes the legendary accounts that have Siegel and Shuster selling the rights to Superman to DC Comics for \$130 in March 1938, perhaps the greatest giveaway in literary history. She says the company coerced the 19-year-olds to sign a release form in order to get paid for previous work they did. "They had no intention of selling what they believed in," she says.

Whatever occurred, the dynamic duo never shared in the hundreds of millions of dollars in profits that Superman brought through movies, television and an endless line of licensed products, including drinking cups, beach towels and lunch pails.

It led to years of bitterness between Siegel and Shuster and DC Comics, as the pair lived from hand to mouth.

Marvel editor Lee, who knew Siegel for many years, says he hired Siegel as a proofreader during this period when the writer needed a job. "Everybody liked him," says Lee (formerly Lieber). "He was a hard worker."

IN 1978, after the huge success of the first *Superman* movie, DC



Christopher Reeve in the role of Superman: A role model who has proved 'wildly popular' in every medium. He may represent the Jewish desire for 'tikkun olam,' repairing the world.

Comics bowed to public pressure and granted the creators each an annual annuity of \$30,000, and gave them credits in each *Superman* comic book.

"We have a good relationship now with DC and Time Warner," says Joanne Siegel. She says that, for her husband's 80th birthday last year, Time Warner chairman Gerald Levin sent her husband a large onyx sculpture of Superman stopping an onrushing train.

Joanne Siegel points out that her husband created numerous other comic-book characters during his career, including *Superboy*, *Dr. Occult* and *The Spectre*.

Interestingly, *The Spectre* is the story of the avenging spirit of God

walking the Earth seeking justice and fighting evil. In one recent tale, it was revealed that this timeless spirit was also the Angel of Death that God sent in the Pessah story.

According to Joanne Siegel, "Jerry always said that's what he wanted to do - come back in spirit form and fight evil."

But it is Siegel's Superman that inspired millions and led to the creation of Batman, Captain America and *Captain Marvel*. What distinguishes Superman is his integrity.

Current *Spiderman* assistant editor Glenn Greenberg notes that Superman started as "the champion of the underdog and all victims. Early scripts found Superman

championing union struggles. He also fought Hitler and the Nazis in World War II."

Superman editor Mike Carlin said that, when he was a boy, Superman stood for things that were achievable for him. "A lot of people identified with Batman because he had no super powers. But I liked Superman because he always tried to do the right thing, for the right reasons."

Says Jurgens, who pens *Superman's* latest adventures: "Superman 24 hours a day is trying to make a change for positive in the world. He is trying to make life better for those around him." Or in Hebrew, *tikkun olam*. (The Jewish Week)

Europe warns its workers that jobs for life are over

WITH 22 million people out of work across Europe and numbers rising every day, business and political leaders are bluntly telling workers that jobs for life are a thing of the past.

The model of a job for life will be reserved for just a few people. France's Labor Minister Jacques Barrot recently told delegates from the Group of Seven industrialized countries at a meeting on unemployment in the northern French town of Lille.

Buzzwords such as job flexibility, mobility, productivity and multi-tasking are increasingly on the lips of European business leaders and politicians.

Hit by rapid technological change and competition from Eastern Europe as well as fast-growing Asian economies, economists say the continent will be forced to follow the lead of the United States and change rigid labor practices as well as scale back cradle-to-grave welfare systems.

"We are looking at a world which has become much more integrated economically. Low-wage competition is becoming ever more of a force. We have to adjust to that," said Frankfurt economist Holger Schmieding of the US investment bank Merrill Lynch.

"It's now much easier for a German industrialist to relocate elsewhere, put his factory in the Czech Republic for instance," he said. "This is something workers must take into account."

G7 ministers from the US, Canada, Britain, Italy, France, Germany and Japan concluded at their recent talks that the way to shorten drole queues was through deficit cuts and reform of "structural problems which impede job creation and income growth."

Unemployment in continental Europe ranges from less than 4 percent in the Czech Republic to 23 percent in Spain. Continental Europeans have taken some steps to change their labor practices.

Europe's largest economy, Germany - battling record unemployment of 10.5 percent - has seen a flood of so-called jobs alliances, where unions have agreed to relax working practices and swallow low pay deals to halt layoffs.

Many economists say much more needs to be done. They say

non-wage labor costs, such as employers' social security contributions, pensions and health insurance, discourage businesses from hiring workers, raise costs and make businesses uncompetitive.

Such charges - along with barriers to cutting workforces when times are tough - have stifled development of a strong services sector which has been the motor of job creation in the US, providing 85 percent of the jobs, they say.

The US unemployment rate is just 5.5 percent, the lowest in the G7 after Japan where it stands at 3.3 percent, a near record and too high for many Japanese.

Economists say that to create more growth in the service sector, airlines, telecommunications, banks and retail services must be deregulated, ending monopolies and changing working hours.

"We have to generate jobs in Europe which are personal-service oriented," said Lehman Brothers economist Keld Holm.

"The problem is that because of the rigidity of the labor market - the red-tape barriers to setting up and running small businesses - we do not have a dynamic service sector to suck up people," said Steve Englander of investment company Smith Barney.

Some economists say unemployment benefits remain too generous by Anglo-Saxon standards, discouraging some workers from seeking jobs.

"The inability to get rid of workers during a downturn also means they don't get hired when things get better," Englander added.

WHILE the Japanese at the G7 talks sang the praises of their famous jobs-for-life policy - although it has started to break down as corporations "downsize" - the Americans told the Europeans it was a luxury no one could afford.

"We can't bring back job security in an economy changing so fast, where businesses are necessarily innovating," said US Labor Secretary Robert Reich.

"But we are dedicated to providing people with more 'employability security' so that when and if they lose a job they can get a new job paying as well so that the tran-

sition from job to job can be as smooth as possible."

European politicians at the G7 meeting said they would not adopt the US hire-and-fire approach in its entirety.

But they admitted they had something to learn from the US experience which they had long denuded as a low-wage "McJobs" economy.

"We need more flexibility in the market," said German Economics Minister Guenter Rexrodt. "We want our own form of labor market but we would certainly take over some elements from the United States."

Instead of jobs for life, European politicians - like the Americans - now are talking about "employability for life."

Barrot said the government in France, where unemployment stands at 11.8 percent, would be committed to investing in continuing education, job training and counseling to "make sure nobody is left by the wayside."

Nobody imagines persuading

Europeans to change their outlook will be easy. Politicians got a taste of how resistant the French were to free market forces last December when striking railway workers paralyzed the country for nearly a month to protest against the government's attempts to reform the debt-laden state rail service.

"Europeans do not have the US tradition of openness, flexibility and mobility," said Schmieding.

Even if Europe does embrace labor market reform, and unemployment falls, it will not bring back the so-called "feel good" factor fast if Britain is to be taken as an example.

In Britain, which embarked much earlier on the path to labor reform under the ardently free-market leadership of former prime minister Margaret Thatcher, unemployment stands at 7.9 percent, among the lowest in the European Union.

Despite a background of steady growth and low inflation, consumer confidence is low and job insecurity abounds because much of the rise in employment has come from part-time or contract work. (Reuter)

OCCUPATION: NAZI-HUNTER

The Continuing Search for Perpetrators of the Holocaust

The renewed interest in the efforts to prosecute the perpetrators of the Holocaust was sparked by revelations that Allied countries such as USA, UK, Canada and Australia had afforded a postwar haven to thousands of Nazi collaborators. Efraim Zuroff, director of the Israel Office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and coordinator of the Center's research on Nazi war criminals, discusses in his book how Nazi-hunting was revived in the seventies, how it was carried out in the eighties and whether it can continue in the nineties.

Foreword by Rabbi Marvin Hier. Published by KTAV. Hardcover, 374 pp.

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Sometimes a child's magical world is more important than the rules

PARENTING RUTH MASON

At this moment, my husband is playing Candyland with my four-year-old on the living-room rug. My husband wants him to play by the rules but my son doesn't want to. I feel he's too young to be expected to follow board-game rules. My husband disagrees. Who is right?

Miriam Reinfeld, Ph.D., lecturer in child psychology; clinical psychologist in private practice, responds:

It can be very frustrating to play a game with rules with a four-year-old.

But keep in mind that it is precisely the same characteristics that make a four-year-old so cute and endearing, and cause him to be so annoying or unreasonable when playing a game.

At this age, he simply doesn't see the world as you do.

His understanding of the world is based completely on the way it looks to him, which is often a rather distorted and ever-changing image of reality.

Children at this age often have difficulty distinguishing fact from fantasy, and the line becomes quite thin when their desires conflict with reality.

SO if your son thinks you're winning and he very much wants to get ahead of you, he may take an extra turn that he actually believes he is entitled to.

When he does something that is not according to the rules, he does not have any understanding of having done so.

The question you must ask is not why this child "cheats," but rather, how you should deal with the child who appears to be cheating. First of all,

remember that he will be quite outraged if you accuse him of cheating because he doesn't see it that way.

Second, you must realize that he won't even understand what you are upset about, or what he has done wrong.

I suggest that you just relax and enjoy spending time with your child. After all, how important is it to you to win at Candyland?

Try to see the world through his eyes. He lives in a magical and enchanted world and it's really quite a treat for an adult to walk a mile (or even one block) in his shoes.

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STATE COMPTROLLER'S REPORT 1996

Well-off cash in on perks for poor

HOUSING MINISTRY

EVELYN GORDON

THE Housing Ministry's "Build Your Own Apartment" program, meant to subsidize housing for the needy, mostly subsidized the more well-off instead, State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat says in the 46th annual report.

The program was meant to consist solely of small apartments, 70-90 sq.m., which, with the aid of the subsidy, would be within the means of the needy families on the target list.

However, most of the apartments built were much bigger, and in some cases the contractors built private homes instead of apartments, the report says. In Ness Ziona, for instance, not a single one of the 197 apartments was within the designated size range: 108 were 106-120 sq.m.; 62 were 120-200 sq.m.; and 27 were 200-220 sq.m.

Furthermore, most of the apartments were built on expensive lands in the center of the country, resulting in the final price being expensive even after the subsidy, the comptroller writes.

As a result of both these factors, the apartments were often unaffordable to the target group, which was supposed to have bought 50% of the 10,000 flats. Instead, these needy families initially purchased only around 17% of the offered homes, and many of them dropped out at later stages. In Eilat, for instance, only nine of the 168 apartments were purchased by the target group, and in Ness Ziona, this group bought only 39 of the 197 apartments.

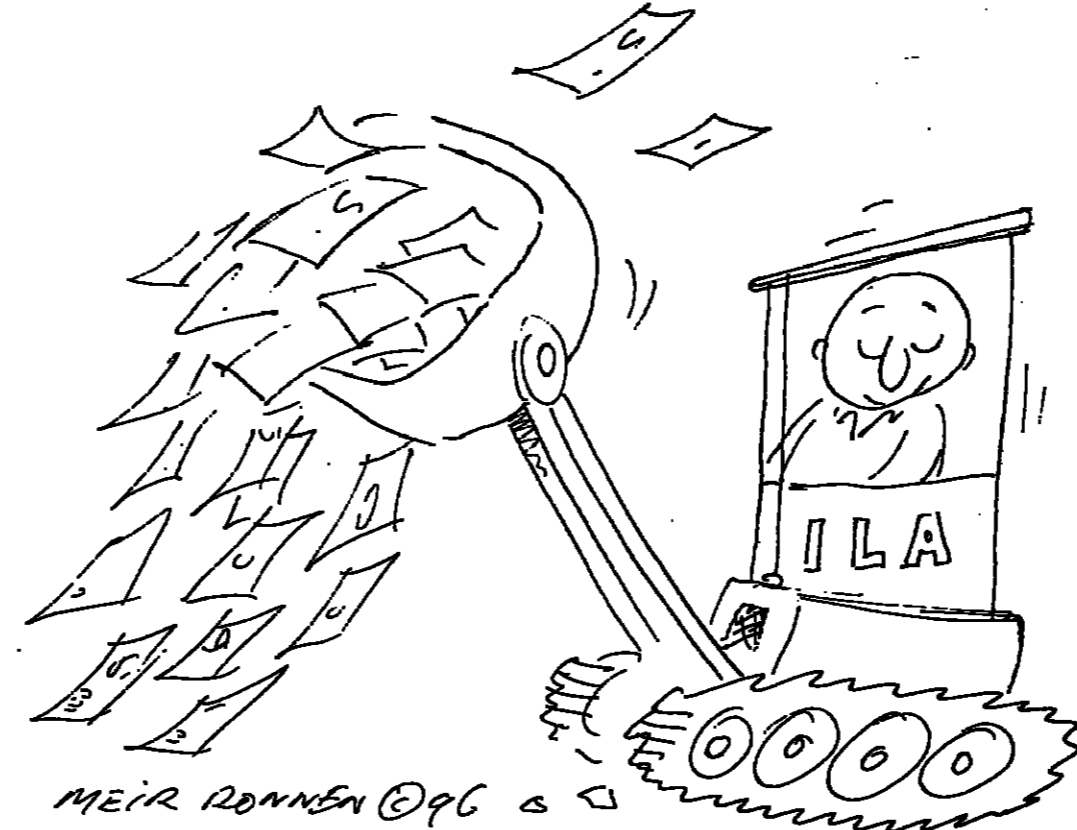
"The overall result was that the state of Israel, via the Housing Ministry and the Israel Lands Administration, gave substantial subsidies - including hidden ones - to families of whom only a small portion were among the neediest sector of the population," the comptroller says in the report.

Compounding the problem was that preference was given to people living in the town where the apartments were built. However, the locations were chosen not by where the need was greatest, but by where the ILA had available land. Therefore, many needy families who lived in nearby towns were kept out of the bidding for the apartments.

When the ministry saw that it was not meeting its 50% goal, the report says, it began granting additional subsidies and adding more people to the target group. However, it did this without the approval of the Israel Lands Council, which was supposed to approve all changes to the program.

Another flaw in the program, the report says, was that the subsidy was set as a percentage of the price of the land rather than as a fixed amount. This meant that the ministry had no control over the size of the subsidy. It also meant that people who bought in the center of the country, where land is expensive, received a much greater subsidy than those in the periphery.

The state comptroller says the ministry never considered the alternative of simply giving a mortgage subsidy, which might have



been better in three ways: It would have been the same amount for everyone, the ministry would have known how much it was committing to in advance, and it would have allowed buyers to purchase wherever they found an appropriate home, instead of in fixed locations.

But even if the program had worked as planned, the report notes, it would have solved only part of the problem, since the number of people in the ministry's target group was much larger than the number of apartments built.

Another problem, the report says, was that the ILA charged builders only for the amount of land they actually built upon, and often even less. In Eilat and Rosh Ha'ayin, therefore, the builders added huge gardens to the houses - in some cases reaching 290 sq.m. and thereby received the land for free. Thus, the 88 private homes which were built in Rosh Ha'ayin in defiance of the project guidelines received free land worth some NIS 8.8 million, or NIS 100,000 per house. The buyers received 173 sq.m. of land apiece, with 138-square-meter houses, for the price of 81 sq.m.

According to the report, numerous other unofficial subsidies were given to the project as well. In Eilat, for instance, the ILA charged for only two-thirds of the 21,840 sq.m. it allotted to the project, costing the state NIS 6.8m., or NIS 40,000 per apartment. Undervaluation of the land brought the subsidy to NIS 11.8m., or NIS 70,000 per apartment. Subsidies for other items, such as bomb shelters that were not built, raised the total even further, to NIS 108,000 per apartment. And all this was before the subsidy which the ministry officially gave.

Not so intensive care

HEALTH MINISTRY

JUDY SEGEL-ITZKOVICH

ANYONE due to enter a hospital is best advised not to read the State Comptroller's Report's chapter on the 50-odd pages may raise blood pressure and induce fear of undergoing surgery or eating hospital food.

The State Comptroller's Report certainly does not increase public confidence in the Health Ministry's ability to supervise medical services and ensure the best health care for all.

The most disturbing section of the report is on intensive care units. These highly expensive facilities are meant for patients in life-threatening conditions who need round-the-clock monitoring and expert nursing and medical care.

The comptroller conducted a four-month study of intensive care units in eight general hospitals: Tel Hashomer's Sheba, Rebecca Sieff in Safed (government hospitals); Tel Aviv's Ichilov, Haifa's Bnai Zion (state-municipal); Beilinson in Petah Tikva, Ha'emek in Afula, Haifa's Carmel (Kupat Holim Clalit); and Jerusalem's Shear Zedek (a voluntary public hospital).

Although getting a bed in an intensive-care unit can mean the difference between life and death for a seriously ill patient, the ministry has not set standards for the number of intensive-care beds required in each hospital.

The cost of treating a patient in these units is an estimated \$858 to \$1,350 per day, but the ministry has set the health fund's payment at only \$265 per diem. As a result, the hospitals have no financial incentive to put patients in intensive-care beds. With too little room, the hospitals send many patients to ordinary departments, where equipment is not as sophisticated and nurses are not at the bedside 24 hours a day.

The comptroller found that on an average day, when eight patients were in Ichilov's intensive-care unit, 13 others needing intensive care were in other departments. Corresponding figures for Sheba were 10/10; Beilinson 8/8, and Carmel 6/7. In many cases, elderly patients, people with chronic respiratory diseases, and terminal cancer patients are the ones selected for beds in other departments even though they need intensive care, the report says.

If they are sent to less-than-optimum departments, at least a doctor from the intensive-care unit should visit the patient from time to time to issue instructions, the comptroller says.

But the Health Ministry has neglected to set down such requirements, and if such specialists do visit, it is usually when the patient's condition deteriorates and the department doctor calls them in, the report says.

Some senior doctors suggested the establishment of "intermediate care" units to treat patients who need more than ordinary hospital departments but less than intensive care; this would save money, they argued. However, others said the amount saved would be minimal, and that when intensive care was medically required, no compromise should be made.

THE report also deals with the tragic incident in November 1994 when renovation work led to the disconnection of vital oxygen lines at Tel Aviv's Ichilov Hospital, and a number of seriously ill patients attached to a respirator subsequently died.

A committee was set up by the ministry to investigate the incident and its recommendations were adopted. However, the comptroller says that providing oxygen in such an emergency is not ensured in many other hospitals. Many pieces of equipment, including a pulse oximeter for monitoring oxygen in respiration patients and plastic "oxygen reservoirs" are missing, and an Ichilov-style incident could occur elsewhere, the comptroller says.

Although respirator manufacturers stipulate that equipment lasts 15 to 20 years and must be regularly maintained, the ministry has issued no standard upkeep regulations for hospitals, the report says. Some respirators were overhauled after 10,000 hours of use, some after 20,000, and some

were dealt with only when they broke down.

Infections can easily spread from patient to patient, but the ministry did not set down binding rules on how often tubes and masks connecting the patient to the respirator must be replaced, the report says. In some hospitals, this was done once a day, while in others it was done twice a week. A standard must be set and replacement of equipment must be put down in writing, the comptroller writes.

HEALTH Minister Ephraim Sneh and some of his predecessors have significantly expanded the number of hospitals permitted to perform heart surgery. In 1989, only seven hospitals were allowed to do this complicated surgery, while today there are 16.

Due to the great expansion of facilities and improved non-surgical care for cardiac patients, occupancy in these surgical departments has dropped to an average of 80 percent. The occupancy rate in some smaller hospitals ranges from 19% to 59%. Experts have noted that when the patient load drops below a critical mass, surgical teams have less experience and practice and the success rate may drop.

In October 1995, Sneh approved the opening of an 11-bed cardiac-surgery department at Meir Hospital in Kfar Sava. But the ministry did not appoint a professional committee to investigate whether there was a need for this 16th department, the report says. The ministry told the comptroller it had documentation examining the need for another cardiac-surgery unit, but these alleged documents were never provided to the comptroller.

DOCTORS in government hospitals are not supposed to do private work without receiving explicit permission from management after meeting strict criteria. In Clalit hospitals, rules on the books bar all outside work. However, the comptroller found that these regulations are violated regularly in both types of hospitals.

At Holon's Wolfson Hospital (government), for example, four surgeons did private work without even asking for permission, the report says. At Tel Hashomer's Sheba Hospital (government) seven surgeons moonlighted without seeking authorization.

Civil service rules bar public hospital doctors from earning more than 50% of their regular salary from private work. But in practice, many earned between 166% and 464% of their hospital salaries from private work, the report says.

Doctors perform long operations in private institutions after long hours of operating in their own hospitals, but the ministry does not instruct hospital managements on limits so patients will not be hurt, the comptroller says.

Duty rota schedules are also mishandled. It was found that a surgeon was on duty at Beilinson in Petah Tikva and Kaplan in Rehovot at the same time, even though the hospitals are 30 kilometers apart and reaching one from the other quickly is impossible.

ON THE issue of mammography, the comptroller criticizes the ministry for failing to institute a mass screening program of women over age 50. In other countries, such programs - in which women are personally invited for a breast X-ray - have reduced mortality from breast cancer by 30%. Last September, the ministry said it would launch such a program, but nothing has happened since then, the comptroller notes.

The comptroller's investigation of food preparation in the hospitals found many shortcomings in its preparation, storage and defrosting. Some of these problems caused harm to the health of patients, the comptroller states.

Many kitchens need renovation, and many institutions - especially geriatric and psychiatric hospitals - lack enough qualified dietitians to ensure that patients are getting the nutrients they need.

Contractors owe NIS 3.8b. in infrastructure work

HOUSING MINISTRY

EVELYN GORDON

THE Housing Ministry recouped only NIS 747 million of the NIS 4.5 billion it spent on infrastructure for private projects in 1990-94, leaving it in the hole to the tune of some NIS 3.8b., according to the state comptroller.

Some of this gap was due to ministry decisions to subsidize the development work. However, much of the gap was due to the fact that the ministry charged contractors much less than it actually spent on the work. It also frequently failed to collect even those sums it did charge, the report says.

Because of the ministry's failure to keep records on each project individually, however, it is impossible to determine what portion of the gap is due to each of these factors, the comptroller adds.

The report notes that instead of charging contractors for the actual cost of development work, the ministry set its rates according to a table which often bore no connection to reality.

Furthermore, it allowed contractors to pay in installments, without obtaining any security for future payments. As a result, the ministry's records show that contractors currently owe it some NIS 67m. However, the report says, the real total is probably much higher, because many contractors were never even billed for work done between 1989 and 1995. Only in 1995 did the ministry hire an outside consultant to try to track down these unrecorded debts.

The ministry has not taken the necessary steps to collect even its known debts, the report continues. It has even continued to award new contracts to defaulting contractors.

The ministry also failed to make legal arrangements in advance which would require private landowners to participate in development costs for a new neighborhood in Beit Shemesh. As a result, the ministry had to swallow these costs, which totaled some NIS 34m. to NIS 38m.

Furthermore, it made no allowances for the unexpected costs that are part of every devel-

opment project. In one Eilat project, for instance, this has so far cost the ministry NIS 3.7m., and the total will rise to NIS 17.6m. if the overruns continue at the same rate.

Finally, the ministry sometimes gave subsidies to ineligible projects. For instance, it decided to subsidize 50% of the development for apartments in the "Build Your Own Home" project, but not for private homes. In practice, however, it gave the subsidies to private homes as well, to the tune of NIS 15m. in 1994-95.

In 1993, the Housing and Finance ministries jointly agreed that this system needed to be changed: Contractors should pay the full cost of the development; records should be kept on each project individually; and development work should start being contracted out to the private sector. However, these decision were never implemented, the report says.

State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat therefore strongly recommends that the ministry implement these decisions and privatize development work.

"Doing development work and collecting payment for it is not necessarily part of the [ministry's] job - particularly when the ministry performs these tasks with the inefficiency described above," the report concludes.

Another serious problem discovered by the comptroller is that the ministry permitted Eilat to collect fees from contractors for development work done by the ministry. The contractors therefore paid twice for these portions of the work, while Eilat got money for nothing - which, according to previous Supreme Court decisions, is illegal.

Finally, the comptroller writes, the ministry and the Israel Lands Administration failed to coordinate policy, with discriminatory results: Contractors on projects managed by the ILA had to pay 65% of the costs of intercity roads serving these projects, but contractors on projects managed by the ministry did not. The comptroller stressed that the two bodies must develop a unified policy on this issue.

Land assessments cost state NIS 1b.

JUSTICE MINISTRY

EVELYN GORDON

THE Justice Ministry's undervaluations of land have cost the state hundreds of millions of shekels each year, the state comptroller says.

The ministry is responsible for the government's land assessment department, whose assessments are used by the Israel Lands Administration to determine the price it will demand for land not sold by public tender.

However, the comptroller found that from 1991-1994, the department's valuations averaged 63% below the market value of the land. In some cases, the differential was as great as 200%.

The comptroller compares the department's assessments with the prices actually obtained when the land was sold via public tender, and found that the assessments undervalued the land by about NIS 1 billion over the four-year period.

The comptroller's report notes that the worst undervaluations occurred with respect to land sold for industrial use. In 1994, for instance, the average gap be-

tween the department's assessments and market prices was 160.7%. However, since about three-quarters of the ILA's revenue derives from land sold for residential construction, the average gap in this area - 84% - is even more significant.

The report finds that the main reason for the undervaluations was that the department took no notice of external factors that might affect the price of the land, such as supply and demand. The department bases its assessments mainly on the price obtained in similar sales in the past, without taking into account the changes in land prices since that time.

"When assessments are based on past sales, it would be appropriate for the department to consider adding an estimate of how much this assessment should be changed in light of the factors

that have influenced the real estate market in the interim," the state comptroller writes.

Another problem, the report says, is that the department updates its assessments according to the Consumer Price Index rather than the Housing Index, even though the latter is much more reflective of changing land prices.

To solve all these problems, the comptroller suggests that the government reconsider the department's role, and whether government bodies should really be required to let the department perform all their assessments. It might be better to let private assessors do the work, and reduce the department to a supervisory role, the comptroller says.

At the very least, two assessments should be done for every piece of land, to try to provide some kind of a check.

Finally, the report says, the ILA should try to increase the amount of land it sells via public tender, since this is the best way to ensure that it obtains full value for the land.

A license to err

IBA

LIAT COLLINS

have a set, the computer was updated only months later.

The department has no set regulations on the training and requirements of its enforcement officers and such workers are chosen arbitrarily without consideration of their suitability.

The enforcement officers entered homes without updated information on the accounts or any arrangements reached by the owners and the authorities "thus bothering citizens who had already paid their debts or reached an installment arrangement." In Upper Nazareth, enforcement officers confiscated equipment despite only having a final demand or warrants without the necessary signatures.

The lack of proper records on confiscated equipment in Upper Nazareth meant the office could not keep track of payments to a private subcontractor who stored the goods. There was not even a written contract between this company and the IBA.

Some 38% of the items sold in the 11 public auctions the comptroller checked fetched a price of up to NIS 400, which barely covered the cost of the annual license fee for the same year. Even after their television sets were auc-

tioned off, many owners were left with a debt of between NIS 1,000 and NIS 3,000. Many of them did not settle this debt.

The licensing office maintains a list of "potential debtors" from data it receives from the Interior Ministry. This list includes singles above age 18; newlyweds; widows and widowers; and the newly divorced. In order to increase the number of television owners who pay the fee, notices are sent to the potential owners telling them of their obligation to inform the licensing division if they own a television set in a household which does not have a license.

Enforcement officers are then sent to homes to check up on the information. In Upper Nazareth, the local branch sent final warnings to these potential owners without ascertaining that the homes had a set.

In many cases, two or even three policemen accompany the IBA official to homes where sets are to be confiscated. This makes the procedure more expensive for the IBA and more traumatic for the owner.

However, under its criticism of the laxity in enforcing the fee collection, the comptroller's office notes in a large percentage of cases the IBA officers went to homes at times when the owners were likely to be out, making the procedure a costly waste of time.

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Unresolved problem of foreign labor

LABOR MINISTRY
EVELYN GORDON

THOUGH the number of foreign workers in Israel has jumped dramatically in recent years, the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry has made no plans to deal with the long-term problems posed by these workers, the State Comptroller's Report says.

The report notes that there were 72,000 legally employed foreign workers in 1995, compared with only 2,000 in 1985, 4,000 in 1989 and 6,000 in 1993. In addition, the number of illegal foreign workers last year is estimated at 100,000. The sudden jump in the number of foreign workers is due largely to the need to replace workers from the territories, especially in the construction and agriculture sectors.

In her report, State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat notes that foreign workers can serve an important short-term purpose by filling temporary shortages of trained manpower. However, she says, there are several long-term disadvantages to a reliance on cheap foreign labor.

First, it retards the introduction of new technology and efficiency measures by making the economic need for them less apparent, and thereby increases the economy's reliance on labor-intensive rather than technology-intensive industries.

Second, it lowers wages and worsens working conditions, thereby reducing the incentive for Israeli unemployed to take jobs in these fields, and reducing the incentive for employers to try to train more expensive Israeli workers. This hurts lower-class Israelis in particular, since they are the ones who would otherwise fill these jobs. However, it also hurts the economy as a whole, the report notes, both because the government must continue to pay unemployment to the Israelis and because the foreign workers generally spend only a small portion of their wages in Israel.

Finally, large numbers of foreign workers can create serious social problems, as has happened in many European countries, the report says. This is already happening in Israel. In 1994, the Employment Service's foreign workers division said there were areas of Tel Aviv where many foreign workers lived that had become magnets for the Israeli criminal element.

"All of this necessitates an examination of the short-term versus long-term considerations and the establishment of a long-term policy relating to foreign workers," the report says.

While the government does periodically reconsider how many permits it should grant, "this is not, in the opinion of the state comptroller, a substitute for an overall plan to create conditions that would encourage the replacement of foreign workers with Israelis," it says.

In the building sector, contractors have claimed that Israelis still did not want the jobs even after they raised wages. However, the Employment Service found that in fact, contractors had not raised their wages at all, the report notes.

Neither the Employment Service nor the Interior Ministry made any attempt to keep tabs on workers whose permits had expired, the report continues. They did not even contact employers when the permits expired to ask whether the worker had left the country.

Furthermore, employers are rarely either prosecuted or fined when illegal workers are discovered, and even when they are fined, the fines are rarely collected. Between January 1994 and May 1995, for instance, 2,347 fines worth NIS 11.44 million were levied, but only 725, worth NIS 2.67m., were collected. As a result, there is little incentive for employers to obey the law, the comptroller says.

Finally, the report notes, many foreign workers live in very poor conditions. However, only in 1995 did the Labor Ministry even begin to try to supervise living conditions for foreign workers. At that point, it discovered that 75% of the workers checked were living in unacceptable conditions. However, only in three cases did the ministry cancel the employers' permits to employ foreign workers; in most cases, the employers were not punished at all.

Overstaffed ministry, overpaid councils

RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

HERB KEINON

THE Ministry of Religious Affairs always seems to take up a big slice of the comptroller's report, and this year is no exception. The 61-page section deals with irregularities in everything from too many advisers to the minister, inflated salaries for religious council heads, and an inequality in the distribution of funds to the country's Moslem sector.

The most damning findings relate to the local religious councils, established to provide religious services to the country's Jewish population, such as kashrut supervision, marriage, *eruvim*, *mikvaot*, and rabbinical services.

"The ministry did not appropriately fulfill its functions in a number of areas regarding the religious councils," the report says.

The comptroller finds that although the ministry was legally obliged to form religious councils based on the results of the last municipal elections some six months after the elections, in the vast majority of cases it has not yet done so.

By November 1995, two years after the last municipal elections, new religious councils had only been formed in 13 of 170 localities. "Differences of opinion regarding the compatibility of the candidates for the job, especially against the background of their political or religious [stream] affiliation, is holding up the establishment of the councils," the comptroller writes.

The report also uncovers "very grave deficiencies" in the council's budgetary processes. The comptroller says the ministry did not approve an overall budget for the councils for 1994-1995 and, as a result, did not determine the ministry's contribution to that budget.

According to law, the ministry is to approve a budget for the council, and will then contribute 40 percent of the funds, with the local council providing the rest. The comptroller takes the ministry to task for allowing the councils to present to local municipalities larger budgets in order to get more money.

Regarding the number of paid



positions in the religious councils, the comptroller writes that this number does not reflect real needs of the councils, but is "to a large degree the result of historical developments."

In addition, the comptroller found that the salaries of the heads of the religious councils, and some of their deputies, are in many cases close to that of government ministers, and are higher than stipulated in ministry regulations. In Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa religious council heads earn NIS 256,000 a year, 97 percent of the salary earned by a minister. In other cities of 100,000 residents or more, the figure is 92 percent of ministerial salaries, or NIS 248,000 a year.

In characteristic understatement, the comptroller writes, "It is reasonable to assume that the weight of responsibility on ministers is inestimably greater than that placed on the local council heads and their deputies. There is no justification for linking the salaries of the local council heads - and as a result their deputies - in such a large degree to the wages of ministers."

Not only does the comptroller suggest drastically cutting the salaries of deputy council heads, but also of doing away with these paid positions altogether, except in the country's three largest cities.

The comptroller points out that the recommendations of the Tza-

dok Committee, set up in 1992 to recommend changes in the functioning of the religious councils, were never implemented. In light of the committee's findings, the comptroller writes, the Ministry of Religious Affairs should carry out a general evaluation of the functioning of the religious councils, the services they provide, their budgetary process and manpower needs.

MANPOWER irregularities were also the main fault the comptroller found with Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetret, though he is never mentioned by name.

Shetret was appointed to the post in February 1995, and from

then until December 1995 he enlisted 20 advisers and workers on special contracts, and appointed another 24 external advisers. Three of these workers had the necessary approval from the state's civil service apparatus.

"When the minister began his job, he decided to institute wide-ranging reforms in a variety of different areas," the comptroller writes. "Since according to the ministry it was impossible to carry out these reforms with the existing staff, the office began enlisting workers, some of them on special contracts, and some of them on agreements for services rendered, and others through employment agencies."

According to the comptroller,

the office - in enlisting new workers - did not always follow norms of good management. The comptroller writes that in two cases there is suspicion that the workers were appointed because they were Labor Party activists.

"As we have pointed out in the past, the plague of political or personal appointments causes serious harm to the public's faith" in government, the comptroller notes. She adds that in order to retain the public's faith, public officials must be strict in carefully carrying out all the regulations regarding job appointments.

REGARDING services provided to the country's Moslem sector - 14.3 percent of the population - the report says their funding falls short of the amount their numbers warrant.

"The comptroller's office is of the opinion," the report reads, "that the Ministry of Religious Affairs should work toward greater equality between the two sectors [Jewish and Moslem], and ensure that the funds allocated to the Moslems fit their representation in the overall population."

The comptroller also says there are "irregularities in the way Moslem religious functionaries are hired and paid." Money earmarked for renovations of Moslem holy sites comes late, and is not allocated according to any set criteria, it adds.

In addition, the report also says there were serious irregularities in the functioning of the Moslem religious courts, of which there are seven district courts in the country, and one court of appeals.

"Despite the importance of these courts in the life of Moslems in the country, there are irregularities in the functioning of the courts in almost all the areas that were checked."

"These courts," the comptroller writes, "do not have the status they deserve."

The courts are not fully manned, and the ministry has not carried out a study to determine "the minimal number of people needed to effectively serve the public." In addition, the report says that "some of the buildings of the court are neglected and not suited for their purpose, which harms the courts' ability to function."

Protected housing centers for elderly poorly supervised

LABOR MINISTRY
EVELYN GORDON

THE Labor and Social Affairs Ministry is negligent in its supervision of protected housing centers for the elderly, the State Comptroller's Report asserts.

First, the report notes, current ministry regulations require a license only for programs housing at least 13 people. Smaller centers, therefore, go completely unsupervised.

However, the ministry is very lax about licensing even institutions that do contain 13 or more people, the report says. In 1995, for instance, the ministry had 226 centers registered, of which it had decided to close 32. Of the remaining 194, 64 percent, or 124, were operating without a license. Of these, 56 had never been licensed.

Regarding the 32 institutions the ministry decided to close, the report examined the 25 that were in the Tel Aviv area. However, legal proceedings to effect the closure were initiated by the ministry against only 10 of these centers, the report says.

Not only did the ministry fail to act against unlicensed institutions, it even referred elderly people to eight centers whose licenses had long since lapsed, it adds.

The state comptroller also found 46 centers whose residents were in need of nursing care which were left unsupervised because they were in bureaucratic limbo between the Labor and Health ministries.

Private eyes get away with wiretapping

JUSTICE MINISTRY
EVELYN GORDON

PRIVATE investigators who wiretap or commit other crimes against personal privacy are not punished by the Justice Ministry's disciplinary committee, according to the State Comptroller's Report.

The ministry's licensing committee for private investigators filed 12 complaints with the disciplinary committee between 1991 and 1995. However, the disciplinary committee did not suspend the investigator's license in any of these cases, even when the investigators were found guilty of wiretapping or invasion of privacy, the report says.

Furthermore, nine of these disciplinary cases dragged on for months, or even years, after the investigator had already been convicted in court. The combination of the light penalties imposed by the committee and the length of time that passed before a decision was reached severely

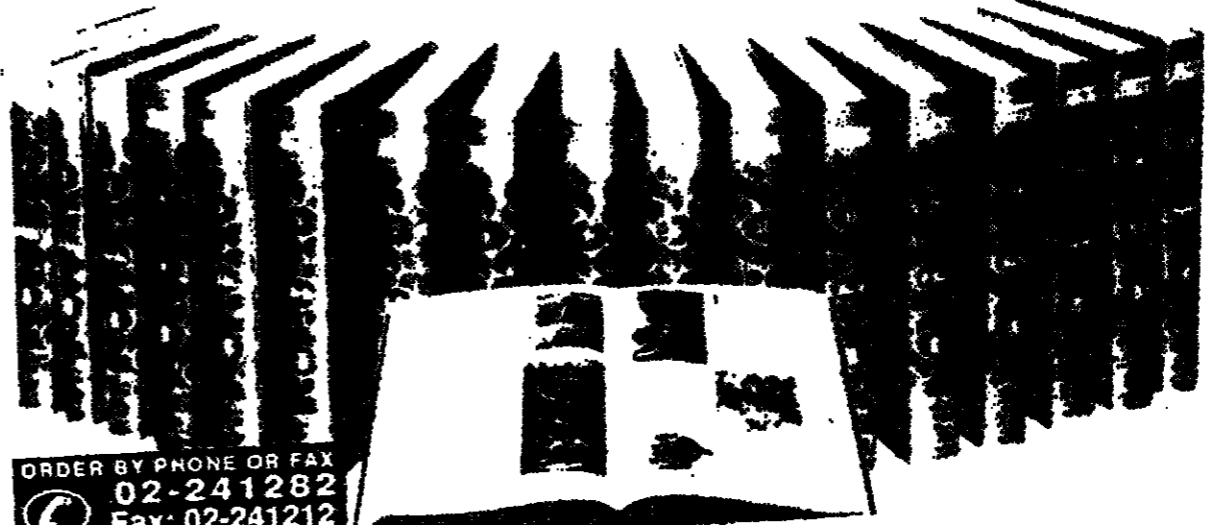
undermined the deterrent power of these proceedings, the comptroller says in the report.

The report also blasts the police's inactivity in the field of invasions of privacy, noting that only after the press focused attention on wiretapping in 1994 did the police begin devoting attention to this area. Although police files were opened against 79 investigators between 1986 and 1995, in all but four cases the investigations had still not been finished as of 1995.

"In the comptroller's opinion, the Justice Ministry and the police must act with greater energy against invasions of privacy," the report states.

It might also be wise, it adds, to expand the number of cases in which the courts are allowed to suspend a private investigator's license, thereby reducing the need for the disciplinary committee to get involved.

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Missed employment opportunities

ABSORPTION MINISTRY

JON IMMANUEL

DESPITE the arrival of 713,000 immigrants from 1989 to 1995, "immigrant absorption is still not the top national priority as one might expect," the comptroller asserts.

In the crucial area of employment, there has been an increase from 62% of immigrants employed in 1991 to 91% in June 1995, partly explained by the fall-off in immigration after 1990-1991, when 200,000 came. But not all immigrants are employed at their educational level, the report says, focusing on the difficulties faced by a highly qualified immigrant work force.

In one university study during the period it was shown that none of 74 doctors, pharmacists and dentists examined for professional competence reached the level of Hebrew required. The Health Ministry should concern itself with raising these examinees' professional language competence, the comptroller says.

The report also finds "grave" the fact that it took the Education Ministry two years to put together a program of Hebrew instruction for new immigrants.

During the six-year period some 10,000 scientists immigrated from the former Soviet Union, of whom 6,000 were absorbed in the workplace with government aid and 1,100 without aid, leaving 3,400 who are not working in their professions.

The three-year integration aid period is not enough, the report says. When one Tel Aviv University scientist suggested extending aid for 800 scientists, the government agreed to extend the period for 300 scientists by a further three years. This meant 500 are about to be fired and "there was no long-term solution for hundreds of other scientists em-



Immigrant absorption 'is still not the top national priority.'

(Jacob Katz)

ployed in universities temporarily."

The report says "this is likely to be a missed opportunity to integrate a workforce at a high technological level and will deter other scientists from these countries from immigrating. This will harm one of the most important national goals - immigrant absorption and exploitation of the potential hidden in it to develop science and research in the country."

Technology "housings" developed in 1990 by the Ministry of Industry and Trade to absorb scientists are positive, but there are defects and 80% of them have not yet been eradicated, the comptroller adds. The fact that the chairman of the board of direc-

tors of the hi-tech hothouses has shares in one of the projects suggests a conflict of interest. This is a problem since part of the financing comes from public funds, the report says.

HOUSING aid, while financially adequate, often did not take the needs of the tenants into account. Thus old people often found themselves in top floor apartments in buildings with no elevators, the report finds.

Large apartments of five rooms from the public sector were not rented, but only sold. This disadvantaged large families, but not that has been remedied by the government, which has agreed to rent them.

Local councils sometimes refused to honor government instructions to house the disabled, the old and one-parent families. Sometimes such categories of tenants were not connected to the water utilities. Objections were lifted only after the government put money at the disposal of these local authorities, the report says.

The comptroller says that if the government had spoken with the authorities earlier, there would have been no delay - up to 18 months - in housing the immigrants properly.

Poorer immigrants were put in poorer neighborhoods and should have been better dispersed among better neighbor-

hoods to aid in their absorption, the comptroller says.

One example is the case of elderly immigrants from Ethiopia who were isolated in caravan camps like Bat Hatzor, designated for "social problems," the report says. The absorption minister has suggested building apartments in the center of the country for older, poorer immigrants. But there is also a need to build on the periphery to solve the problem in its entirety, the comptroller says. Elderly people made up 107,000 or 18.8% of all the immigrants from the former Soviet Union, it notes.

One solution welcomed by the comptroller was housing 200 Ben-Gurion University students in a caravan camp near Beer-Sheva in return for conducting social work in the neighborhood. Amidar, the municipality and the Absorption Ministry also established a network of services including ulpanas, kindergartens and health clinics.

But the comptroller notes a general problem in the decision-making process in providing housing solutions. Although the decisions have to be based on data from many sources, only one ministry usually makes decisions.

Not all the relevant bodies were involved in every phase of the process, and decisions were not always made together. Consequently, decisions were often defective in the application, the comptroller says.

REGARDING educational subsidies, parents are not always receiving the payments for their children's school needs, and this should be improved, the comptroller says.

The dropout rate of students from immigrant countries who enroll at institutions of higher education is 26%, substantially higher than the general student body, the report adds.

Hazardous waste piles up untreated

ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY

LIAT COLLINS

WATER supplies and public health are seriously threatened by the tens of thousands of tons of hazardous waste which are not being adequately disposed of every year, according to the State Comptroller's Report.

The waste is created by industrial plants, research centers, hospitals and other places legally obliged to ensure its safe disposal at Ramat Hovav, the only site authorized to deal with hazardous waste. One of the greatest problems in tackling the issue is the lack of precise information, the report says.

The Environment Ministry does not have exact data even from companies which have applied for a permit to deal in hazardous materials. The ministry does not ensure that the hundreds of smaller companies each producing limited amounts of hazardous waste dispose of it at Ramat Hovav. Many of these smaller companies are situated among population centers, creating an immediate threat to residents, the comptroller says.

Dangerous waste is also likely to build up at local sewage treatment plants, particularly if industrial waste has not been treated correctly and flows into the municipal sewage system, the report notes.

A check revealed 10,000 tons of toxic sludge in the central region alone. For example, badly polluted sludge containing high concentrations of heavy metals was found next to the Lod sewage treatment plant, close to a residential neighborhood. The initial cost of extracting this sludge, not including the transport and tipping fees, would reach NIS 11 million. The comptroller also says it is not enough to just transport the waste without cleaning up the area it has polluted.

The high cost is also a factor holding up the treatment of contaminated hospital waste. An interministerial committee established to examine the problem found it would cost some NIS 20m. a year to deal with the hospital waste.

ALTHOUGH large quantities of hazardous waste have built up at some industrial plants, there are difficulties in enforcing the Business Licensing Law which stipulates how to treat and dispose of the waste, the report says.

Some types of waste are particularly toxic and could explode on contact with certain other materi-

als. Even relatively small amounts could cause huge environmental damage. For example, if one kilogram of cadmium were to reach the underground water reserves, 200,000 cubic meters of drinking water could become contaminated and unusable. A factory employing 10 workers could cause the pollution of the drinking water of an entire town.

Sludge containing heavy metals is often created in the initial treatment of hazardous waste by factories which use hazardous materials in their production process. In order to cut costs of dealing with this sludge, many companies either leave it where it is or do not use professional methods to transport it for safe disposal.

The problems do not stop once the toxic waste arrives at Ramat Hovav, the report notes. According to data supplied by the site's management, some 63,000 tons of dangerous organic waste there is awaiting disposal by an incinerator which is only scheduled to be installed in August.

The Environmental Services Co. (Ramat Hovav), which runs the site, estimates the cost of clearing the waste gathered there over the years is likely to reach hundreds of millions of dollars.

Thousands of barrels of untreated hospital waste have also collected at the site because of the lack of an incinerator.

The handling of hazardous materials has improved since the establishment of the Environment Ministry in 1988, but the problems have by no means been solved, the comptroller concludes.

In another section of the report, the comptroller found minimal improvement in the handling of non-hazardous solid waste since it last examined the subject in 1991. It called on the Environment and Interior ministries to speed up planning and permission procedures for central landfills to replace the illegal "unsupervised" ones which continue to cause pollution, and to expedite and expand recycling programs.

The report also found deficiencies in the treatment of agricultural waste, including fecal waste from cowsheds and chicken farms which cause a health hazard as well as unpleasant smells and an environmental nuisance. It called on the Environment and Agriculture ministries to work harder toward finding suitable solutions to the problem to prevent the pollution of water supplies.

Sewage flows unchecked

INTERIOR MINISTRY

BILL HUTMAN

SOME 120 million cubic meters of raw sewage and 55 million cu. m. of excess treated sewage flowed unchecked last year into the nation's eco-system, the comptroller says in a hard-hitting report on the government's failure to establish a national sewage plan.

"Sewage and excess treated sewage [normally used for certain agriculture purposes] flow into the environment, the rivers, the Mediterranean Sea, the Kinneret, and the Red Sea," the comptroller says.

"Sewage that is not treated properly harms the land, vegetation, and animal life. For instance, in 1995, treated sewage from the Ayalon area flowed into Nahal Ayalon; waste from the Barkan Industrial Zone, including heavy metals and other pollutants, penetrated the mountain aquifer; waste from people and animals flowed into rivers and from there to the Kinneret."

The comptroller singles out improper waste treatment in the Lod area. An Environment Ministry study in 1994 found "ground level oxidation ponds containing high levels of heavy metals and poisons, including chrome, zinc, copper, and cadmium."

"Ministry experts believe that persons who are exposed to these pollutants, in the high concentrations found, are in danger of harming their respiratory, nervous, and digestive systems," the comptroller writes.

The comptroller notes that the environment minister ordered Lod Municipality to clean up the oxidation ponds, and forbade the construction of schools nearby. But as of November, the municipality had still failed to take any action.

The report notes that an array

of government and local authorities are responsible for sewage treatment. Most of the blame, however, is pinned on the Interior Ministry, which is the major body responsible for coordinating sewage treatment nationwide.

"The planning of a system for treating waste, for carrying and getting rid of it, requires taking a general view of the nation's water system," the comptroller writes. Various authorities are taking action to deal with the problem, but with little coordination, the report notes.

In 1992, the government decided to set up a national council on sewage, and in 1993 the interior minister appointed members to the council. But in recent years the council has ceased to function.

In addition, a national water and sewage treatment plan has yet to be drawn up, and at the rate the government is presently working on the project it will take at least two more years for one to be completed, the report says.

Many of the waste problems detailed in the report are not new. In 1990 the comptroller also reviewed the issue and found major problems, most of which were not dealt with, according to the latest report.

Among the health hazards found in earlier reports, but which the comptroller says remain, is the construction of new neighborhoods, housing projects, and industrial areas without proper sewage facilities.

Not only are the projects built without the proper sewage facilities, but families move into new homes, and factories begin work, before the facilities are completed. The comptroller notes that this is illegal, on top of being a health and environmental hazard.

Arabic lessons fail to take off

EDUCATION MINISTRY

BATSHEVA TSUR

IN 1988, Arabic-language instruction was made compulsory in all Hebrew-language schools from 7th to 12th grade, but the Education Ministry did not implement the decision and merely "encouraged" study, according to the state comptroller.

As a result, only some 128,000 Jewish pupils, or 46 percent of those required, studied the language in 1995, the report states.

While the percentage was 50% in 7th grade, it dropped to only 4% in 12th grade in state schools and 2% in state religious schools. In the haredi school system, Arabic was not taught at all.

There were two major reasons for this, according to the report. First, the ministry did not enforce the regulation until 1995. Moreover, schools were allowed to teach an alternative second language such as French or Russian.

Educators noted that only those pupils who studied the language until 12th grade could use it effectively, the report says.

The number of those completing matriculation exams in Arabic is not enough to satisfy the

demands of the IDF, the report notes. At the same time, there are insufficient teachers and this is felt particularly in outlying areas. While more teachers are being trained, there do not seem yet to be enough, the report says. The comptroller recommends that additional teachers from the Arab sector be brought into the Hebrew-language schools to teach Arabic.

In 1994, the ministry gave the annual nationwide exam in Arabic language to 7th-9th graders, but failed to collate the results so it was not clear whether the standard had improved. Many of the Arabic-language inspectors were of the opinion that the exams were not useful in any case, the report says.

The comptroller notes, on the positive side, that in 1995 a decision was implemented to extend compulsory Arabic up to grade 10. This should be re-examined to ensure that the language is properly learned and further compulsory study should be considered, the report recommends.

Unnecessary research center

FOREIGN MINISTRY

LIAT COLLINS

THE Foreign Ministry's Center for Political Research is an understaffed, under-utilized and ineffective section whose activities "contribute very little," the state comptroller writes in the report.

The center was established in 1974 following the recommendations of the Agranat Commission on the Yom Kippur War to provide an alternative source of intelligence material to the IDF's intelligence branch.

Despite the huge changes in the regional and global political maps, the ministry did not redefine the center's aims or implement necessary changes, the report says. In addition, the center does not have qualified personnel. The result, says the comptroller, is reports which ministry staff themselves admit are of little value.

The lack of personnel is so severe that one section of the center has ceased to exist and another consists of the section head alone. Researchers are placed without considering their experi-

ence or knowledge of required languages. Many of the staff are temporary placements awaiting a posting abroad, the report says.

"In this case, the center's work cannot be sufficiently serious, to supply basic research, short- or medium-term predictions or other products which could serve as a basis for the decision-making process," the comptroller writes. Staff at the center are not given training courses or special workshops on research methods, the report adds.

The center's output tends to be reports on current events without analyses or assessments. Subjects are chosen arbitrarily and, according to the comptroller, "there are issues which are completely ignored including some on the national agenda or of great importance to the ministry's policy."

The center's budget for 1994 was NIS 4.8 million of which it used NIS 4.7 million, most of it on salaries, overtime hours and trips abroad.

Gaps still exist between Jewish and Arab, Druse sectors

EDUCATION MINISTRY

BATSHEVA TSUR

PROGRESS has been made in improving education and facilities in the Druse and Arab sectors, but there is still a gap compared with the Jewish sector, the state comptroller writes in the report on the Education Ministry.

The comptroller notes there have been "considerable achievements" in the Druse sector over the past few years including a decrease in the number of dropouts; progress in the building of classrooms; and a considerable improvement in the training of teaching staff and preparation of curricula.

The Druse population comprises about 1.7% of the total population. A third of the Druse pupils drop out of school between the ages of 14-17 as compared with 2% in the Jewish schools. There is also a high percentage of hidden dropouts - pupils who are registered but do not study, the report notes.

In Druse rural areas, the dropout rate is 24% as compared with 15% in Jewish development towns. Twenty-four percent of Druse youth obtain matriculation (bagrut) certificates as compared with 25% of the Jewish youth in development towns and 45% of all Jewish youth.

Druse educators stated that if technological streams were provided in schools, the dropout rate could probably be lowered, the report notes.

In 1992, the ministry introduced a five-year plan to improve the level of education in the Druse sector and bring it up to the level of the rest of the country.

According to the report, the new plan did not include similar benefits for the Druse with regard to improving buildings or giving extra hours to weak pupils. The Druse sector is allocated relatively less per capita and fewer extra teaching hours than the rest of the population, the report says.

"This is not consistent with the government's decisions and aspirations for equality in this field," the report states. It notes that previous reports have also pointed this out.

At the same time, Druse local councils allocate considerably less for education than Jewish development towns and provide fewer alternatives for those not seeking the regular matriculation track.

Nine of the 18 Druse villages do not offer technological frameworks and there are hardly any possibilities for youth who work to study in the evenings. The percentage of Druse youth in special education frameworks is lower than that in the Jewish sector - 2.84% as compared with 3.37%.

Yet, the report notes that the number of dropouts is expected to lessen and the number of matriculation certificates is expected to increase in the near future as a result of the 1992 plan. "The government must do everything possible to encourage high educational achievements in the Druse sector to ensure that they are equal partners in our civilian life," the report says.

The rate of school attendance in the Arab sector is low compared with the Jewish sector, and this is particularly marked among the 16- to 17-year-olds who are not covered by the compulsory education law. But neither the ministry nor the local councils have up-to-date figures, the comptroller says.

In June 1995, the ministry set up a committee to examine the problem and suggest ways of improving the situation. It has held several meetings but has not yet made its recommendations.

According to ministry estimates, in 1993 some 8.4% of pupils in compulsory education frameworks in the Arab sector did not attend school regularly, compared with 3.8% in the Jewish sector. Among 16- to 17-year-olds, the rate was 39.7%, compared with 9.9% in the Jewish sector.

Discriminatory haredi funding

THE Education Ministry's allocation of funds for haredi cultural activities "was sometimes discriminatory," according to the comptroller, who conducted an examination of the criteria used by the ministry committee.

The report says the High Court of Justice was petitioned time and again by associations which felt discriminated against by the ministry.

In 1994, a new department was set up in the ministry to support haredi institutions which hold Torah classes and have cultural events. That year, some NIS 21.5 million were allocated for haredi cultural activities. The Knesset's Finance Committee increased

that sum by NIS 10m. The request was made by the Treasury at the behest of the Education Minister and no reasons were given, the report says.

The report faults the committee for not checking the allocations given by other ministries although it made sure not to exceed 75% of an institution's budget, as stipulated by law. With more than one ministry allocating funds, however, some associations received 100% of their budget, the report says, urging that this problem be addressed.

In addition, many of the institutions used the money intended for cultural activities to cover debts.

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Jobs for the boys

BUILDING CENTER

BILL HUTMAN

THE chairman of the board of directors, director-general, and deputy director-general of the Israel Building Center were all appointed primarily due to their membership in the Labor Party, and not because they were professionally suited for the positions, the state comptroller asserts her report.

"Such a collection of senior officials with connections to the minister's party, in a body that carries out such little activity like the Building Center, is not reasonable and proper, and points to the appointments resulting from the officials' political affiliations," the comptroller writes.

The report on the Israel Building Center covers the periods from 1990 to 1994, but centers on the period when the building center was under the control of the Labor-Meretz government, and Housing Minister Binjamin Ben-Eliezer of the Labor Party in particular.

The comptroller blasts the political appointments, as well as the Building Center itself, saying it is unclear why the state-run organization was not disbanded.

In 1992, the comptroller issued a report uncovering political appointments in the building center under the previous Likud government.

The latest report is particularly critical of the appointment in April 1994 of a new chairman of the board, noting that he was a member of the Labor Party's central committee and bureau. From 1991 to the summer of 1993 the center had no permanent chairman of the board.

Ben-Eliezer appointed the former chairman of the Jewish National Fund to head the center's board in July, 1993, although the board itself was not informed of this decision until March the next year, the report says.

The finance minister also never approved the appointment. The present chairman of the board, however, received the approval of both the ministers and the board members.

The Building Center director-general is also a Labor Party central committee member, who worked as an official at Na'amat before her appointment in February last year. Her predecessor at the center quit after less than a year, because of an internal company squabble.

The company secretary was appointed by the former director-general, without the board's approval, in May 1993. The next month, when the issue of the secretary's salary was brought up at the center's finance committee, it was never reported that the position was already filled.

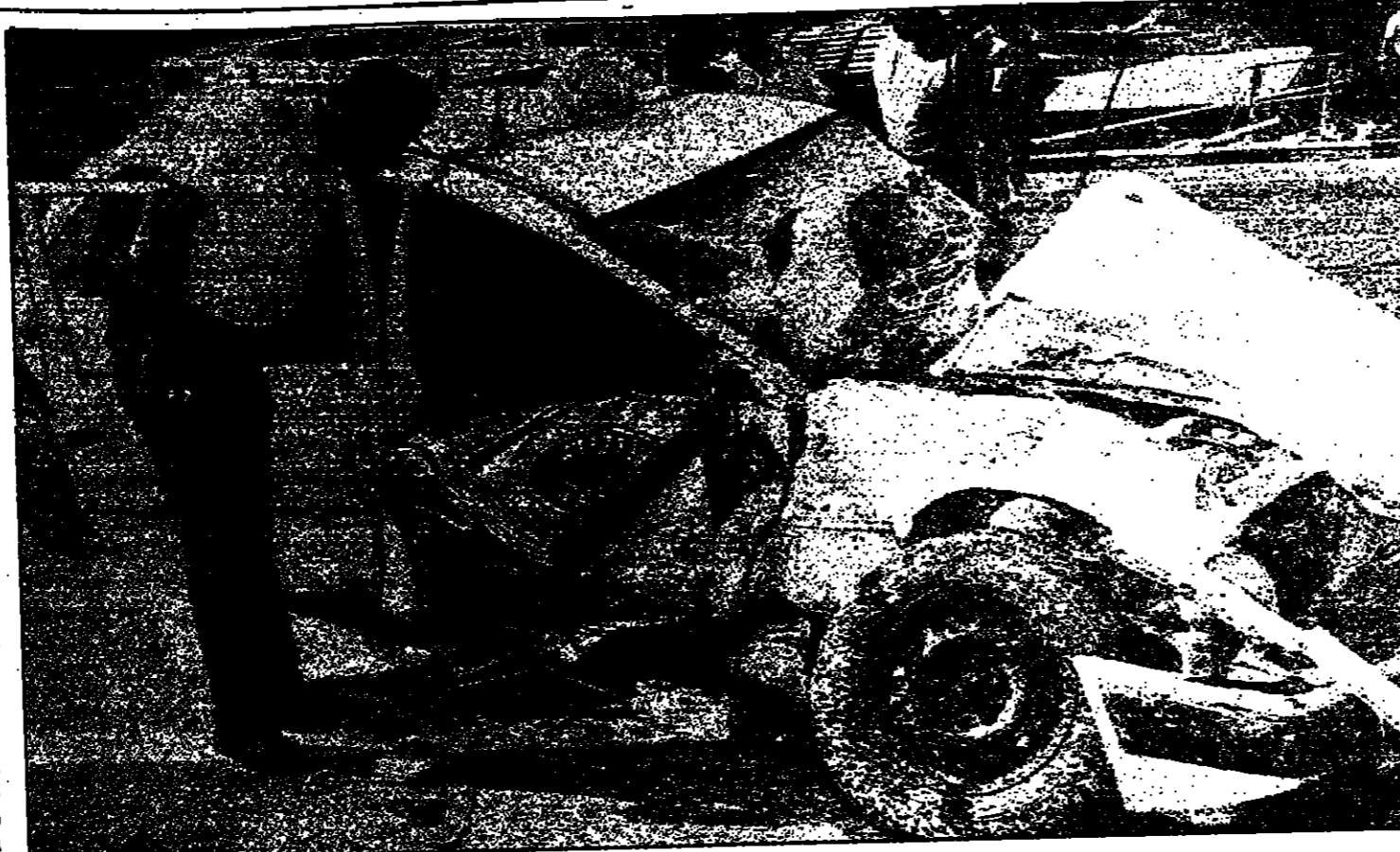
The comptroller notes that the company secretary "only had a high school education. It was found that the company secretary was a member of the Labor Party central committee." Her salary was 50 percent of the director-general's.

"Because of a conflict between her and the director-general, the board of directors in December 1993 decided to fire her, effective immediately," the comptroller states. The cost of her salary for about six months work was about NIS 70,000.

The comptroller found that the present deputy director-general is also a Labor Party member, having served as the Na'amat director in Jerusalem. Her previous work experience did not qualify her for the post, according to the report.

The report also details the decreasing activity of the building center between 1990 and 1994, coinciding with a sharp increase in the company's deficit, part of which was covered by the Housing Ministry.

Income, largely from exhibitions organized by the Building Center, dropped some 60 percent from 1993 to 1994, following a smaller drop in revenue the previous years. Between 1990 and 1993 salaries made up 36% to 38% of revenue, compared with 70% in 1994.



The death toll from traffic accidents since the founding of the state is 18,700

(Ariel Jerozolimski)

One guiding hand needed to control accident prevention

ROAD SAFETY

JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

THE death toll from traffic accidents since the founding of the state is 18,700 - some 500 fewer victims than those from all of Israel's wars. Despite political efforts to end such wars, too little has been done to blunt the toll of Israelis vs. Israelis on the roads, the state comptroller says.

The comptroller reviews efforts to improve road safety that are the shared responsibility of a number of authorities. These include the Transport Ministry and its Road Safety Administration (RSA), the Israel Police, Public Works Department (PWD) in the Ministry of Construction and Housing, the Education Ministry, the Health Ministry and a number of voluntary groups such as the National Council for Accident Prevention.

The report concludes that their efforts have been inadequate, and are probably even misdirected, as building more roads only increases the use of private vehicles at the expense of public transport and further boosts traffic and accidents.

The comptroller, looking at the statistics and findings of her investigators, notes that previous comptroller's reports dealt with these issues. This, she says, requires the government to make "a special effort, and immediately to correct the shortcomings and concentrate accident-prevention efforts in a single body, in order to plan, initiate and coordinate their implementation." This body must act as quickly as possible and include the highest level of professionals in the field, the comptroller says.

Money thrown away in garbage disposal plan

PORTS and RAILWAYS AUTHORITY

LIAT COLLINS

ALTHOUGH not one local authority has signed an agreement to use trains to transport its garbage to central landfills, the Ports and Railways Authority has spent nearly a million shekels on suitable equipment that remains idle, the comptroller says.

The authority had discussed the possibility of garbage transport by rail since 1988, but the idea received a boost in 1993 when the government decided to close the small garbage dumps around the country and develop instead central, supervised landfills at five major sites. The authority's assessment is that rail transport is cheaper than trucks, particularly for longer distances.

Between 1991 and 1992, it bought 20 containers suitable for garbage transport and 12 flatwagons which carry the containers. The cost was some NIS 800,000. NIS 370,000 of this was for the containers which are not suitable for transporting anything other than waste. Consequently, they have not yet been used.

The authority decided to use the flatwagons, which had also been sidelined since purchase, for transporting salt, and in 1992 purchased 14 suitable containers at a cost of NIS 230,000, the report notes. The purchase was not budgeted for, no tender was issued, and no contract signed. The deal was authorized retroactively by the authority director, who noted it deviated from normal procedure, the comptroller writes.

"Expanding the roadways, which was aimed at reducing crowding on the roads and minimizing the number of accidents, is nothing but a short-term solution to these problems, as the rate of road development does not keep up with the growth in the number of vehicles," the comptroller writes. While improving roads, the authorities must work to moderate the use of vehicles by developing public transportation.

The RSA had set a goal of reducing the rate of road fatalities in 1994, compared with 1993. Unfortunately, it did not succeed, the report says, and according to one indicator the rate in 1994 was even higher than in 1990. Israel's efforts to cut the road toll have fallen considerably below those of most of the world's developed countries, the comptroller adds.

TRANSPORT Minister Yisrael Kessar was faulted by the comptroller for approving a disproportionate number of road development projects in municipalities and local authorities headed by Labor Party mayors and chairmen after he visited these areas. Supervisors, the comptroller says, were shocked to find that road development budgets were set aside by the Transport Ministry according to political criteria, rather than objective and professional ones. Municipalities and local authorities headed by Likud representatives received only a minority of these funds.

Regarding education, although the government decided in 1993 that lessons on road safety would become mandatory, by the current school year, 550,000 of the 1.2 million children in kindergarten to 12th grade received no such lessons. In addition, studying the theoretical part of drivers' education courses was to have become required learning in 11th grade, but only 64% studied it this year, and of those, only 40% passed the theoretical exam. Thus, only about a quarter of 11th graders passed these tests.

The Israel Traffic Police was established to increase enforcement of traffic laws, but the number of tickets handed out in 1994 was lower than that in 1993, even though the number of violations certainly did not decline, the report says. The number of drivers' licenses revoked due to serious violations also decreased, and some tickets were canceled because of missing information or failure to present the cases in court on time.

Although the number of road accidents in the Arab sector is considerably higher than in the Jewish sector, due to poor road conditions and inadequate driver education, little has been done in this field, the comptroller states.

Trucks carrying surplus freight cause many accidents, but the maximum weight permitted here is 8.8% to 25% higher than the limits in 28 European countries, the report notes. In a check, 17%

of trucks on Israel's roads were found to carry significantly excess freight. Nothing has been done by the PWD to build special weighing stations next to key roads traveled by trucks, thus deterrence is minimal, the report says.

The Fund for Preventing Accidents has been allocating considerable sums for years, but has not handed out all the money budgeted or examined alternative projects that may have more beneficial effects or demanded that recipients provide details on the work they have done.

The National Council for Accident Prevention has 3,000 volunteers on its books, but many of them are in name only and do not actually work in the field to identify violators and violations. The council twice demanded from the aforementioned fund - and received - allocations for the same projects.

The Transport Ministry's licensing bureau did not apply sanctions against drivers with bad driving records who did not take part in safe-driving courses, the comptroller says. Many of them postponed participation in such courses for up to five years, during which time they continued to endanger others on the roads.

Moreover, the report says, the Health Ministry has failed to ensure the regular sending and investigation of information on alcoholics and drug addicts who apply for drivers' licenses or already hold them. The comptroller has warned about this danger several times over the past decade, but nothing has been done.

Don't shoot the messenger, blame the management

POSTAL AUTHORITY

JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

The Postal Authority's "Business Line for Express Mail Services" launched in 1989 is neither express, nor service, nor good business, the report states.

Although express mail customers grew by only 48 percent between 1990 and 1994, the number of complaints increased 533% over this period. Many customers abandoned the public messenger service for private and more efficient messenger companies.

The comptroller says the door-to-door messenger services, and indeed all the others, were a losing proposition that the authority had to subsidize in 1994 to the tune of NIS 350,000.

Due to the lack of suitable facilities and computerization, the authority often failed to collect payment for services that were supplied. In mid-1995, these back debts totaled NIS 2.24 million, almost half of them for services rendered over the previous five years. Only 340 non-paying customers were taken to court, but because of delays, it was difficult to present evidence, and many claims were dropped.

The comptroller lashes out at management, declaring that its behavior "points to serious negligence, even severe harm to public faith in the service. It's easier to preserve credibility than to regain what was lost... The Postal Authority must act quickly to correct the shortcomings and

conduct a basic economic and administrative assessment of its messenger services... to see whether they are worthwhile."

According to the authority spokeswoman, the authority's director-general Ran Levin, who took over less than two years ago from a failing management, quickly became aware of the major problems affecting express mail and appointed a new manager. When he did not improve things, Levin replaced him with yet another manager and has personally invested time in rehabilitating the service, spokeswoman Cigal Galil said.

The Postal Authority believes that with time and additional work, the service could be a major money-maker, especially due to the growing use of mail-order catalogs and cable TV's shopping channel, and the resultant dispatch of goods directly to the home.

Express mail includes a number of services: door-to-door, in which a letter or package is picked up from the customer and taken to another address; "bring me" when mail is brought to the customer from another address; double transfer, when the messenger exchanges mail between two people; payment of bills at a postal bank and bringing the documents to the customer; and bringing mail from a post office branch to the customer's home.

Unfair spread of reserve duty

IDF

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

RESERVE duty is not being meted out fairly and the IDF is not doing enough to close the growing gap between reservists from combat units and auxiliary units, according to the state comptroller.

This, the comptroller says, has reduced morale and compounded the burgeoning phenomenon against serving in the reserves altogether.

Even though the IDF has cut the number of annual reserve days, motivation to serve has plummeted, the report notes. The IDF, aware of the problem, has dealt with it by calling up twice the number of reservists as needed, instead of trying to increase motivation by equally dividing the burden, the report says.

"The IDF needs to make a lot of changes in operating the reserves," the report says. "The method of dividing the burden of reserves has great public, social and economic impact and directly affects the level of readiness to serve in reserves."

According to the report, the phenomenon of unfair division of the reserve burden is growing. This is most prevalent in the burden of service among combat units.

The comptroller says that since the tasks given to combat reservists cannot be carried out by other reservists, the former should be compensated.

Lack of motivation is making it difficult for the army to call up enough reservists, particularly for service in Judea, Samaria and the

Gaza Strip. The report notes that the army compensated by calling up three combat reservists for every two needed. In non-combat units the figure was dramatically higher with 10 soldiers called up for every two positions. Even then, regular troops were sometimes called to make up the missing slots.

"There is a feeling of social legitimacy given to the phenomenon of getting out of reserve duty and a sense of being a 'sucker' for those who do serve," the report says.

The report notes that the number of reservists who were AWOL grew by 54 percent between 1992 and 1995 and that desertions increased by 14%. It says the IDF treatment of this problem is not satisfactory.

The comptroller recommends that the army make a more serious attempt to bring back those reservists who have avoided duty. Among combat units this is about 20% and in support units it reaches as high as 40%, the report says.

The report also notes that the IDF did not adequately train reservists due to bad planning and coordination between units and lack of equipment.

The IDF also suffers from an inadequate number of doctors and medics, which puts a greater burden on those reservists, the report says. But it notes the IDF is compensating with immigrant doctors and internists. The army, however, has no plan to meet the need for medics, the report notes.

Civil Guard volunteers lack proper training

CIVIL GUARD

BILL HUTMAN

THIRTY-FOUR percent of Civil Guard volunteers questioned by the comptroller had not trained at a shooting range for over two years. The comptroller also found that police failed to check whether volunteers have psychiatric histories that forbid them from using weapons.

Last year, the comptroller's office visited 188 of the nation's 317 Civil Guard bases, and gave questionnaires to over 15,000 of the Civil Guard's 50,000 volunteers.

The report notes the importance of the Civil Guard, founded in 1974, in providing police with additional manpower for a wide range of tasks, from routine patrols to helping in the national police crime lab.

The comptroller says, however, that Civil Guard volunteers are not being properly trained and its manpower not effectively used. There is also a high dropout rate, with many volunteers leaving after less than a year of service.

"The responsibilities, rights, and obligations of Civil Guard volunteers on duty are the same as those of policemen," notes the chapter in the section on the Ministry of Internal Security. "Volunteers are supposed to be permitted to serve only after undergoing basic weapons training," but some are not getting such training.

The volunteers' commanders in many cases have also not received the proper training. "From a review of the personnel files of 30 commanders [of volunteer training bases], it turns out 14 did not receive training for the position until half a year or more after starting work."

The comptroller notes that the Interior Ministry checks whether a person has a psychiatric record before granting a gun license. Police examine whether Civil Guard volunteers have criminal records, but because of bureaucratic problems don't check their psychiatric records, the report notes.

Equipment worth millions never made it to warehouses

DEFENSE MINISTRY

STEVE RODAN

MILLIONS of dollars worth of equipment paid for by the Defense Ministry has never made it to IDF warehouses, the state comptroller says in her report.

The IDF has failed to coordinate its acquisition of equipment with the Defense Ministry, which pays the bills. The result is that thousands of items purchased are simply unaccounted for, the report says.

The comptroller says that for years the IDF did not bother to transfer receipts of delivery to the Defense Ministry for the equipment it received. The result was that the ministry had no idea whether millions of dollars of equipment paid for had already been delivered.

The comptroller calls this "a grave shortcoming" and asserts that the IDF Quartermaster never performed a survey of the missing equipment.

It was not possible to determine how much equipment was paid for and yet never received by the military, the comptroller says. According to a survey of acquisition records from the air

force, however, as much as \$47 million of equipment is missing.

The report says that the Defense Ministry is aware of the failure to record equipment received. The Defense Ministry's purchasing mission in New York is formally responsible for ensuring that items purchased are delivered, but told the comptroller that it does not have information to fulfill this task.

The Defense Ministry purchases billions of dollars worth of arms and spare parts for the IDF. The lion's share of the money is from the \$1.8 billion Israel receives annually from the US in military aid. All but \$400m. of this money must be spent in the US.

The comptroller says the IDF does not have guidelines regarding the responsibility of its suppliers and what to do when they do not honor their contracts.

The comptroller cites the navy, which purchased a large amount of engines for the Dabur patrol boats, and did not insist on holding the supplier responsible for the terms of the contract.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

12

'Gov't policy fuels demand' Scitex rejects new Gilo bid of \$25 per share

Jerusalem Post Staff

THE government's expansive fiscal policies have contributed to the acceleration of prices, demand and import growth...

budget deficit, accelerated import of consumer items, growth of retail commerce and banking credit all add up to a picture of expanding demand.

SCITEX's major shareholders have rejected a new proposal from high-tech entrepreneur David Gilo to purchase the company...

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

Paper Company, Clal Electronics Industries, Discount Investments and PEC Israel Economic.

Gilo said the proposal would give Scitex's shareholders the opportunity to sell their shares at an 80-percent premium over the trading price as it stood when he first submitted his acquisition proposal on March 31.

The proposal would also give any of the principle shareholders who prefer to retain their shares the opportunity to do so, he said.

Gilo added that he and the rest of those in his group of investors believed that under their leadership Scitex's "opportunities for significant growth" would be enhanced, thereby benefiting the company's employees as well.

In a letter of response, Tadmor said he and his colleagues appreciated Gilo's recognition that there is in Scitex "great value" which is not fully reflected in its current share price.

However, he wrote, "we do not believe that Scitex should be taken private so that this value can be captured by you and your purported investor group at the expense of our shareholders - and to the severe detriment of our customers and employees."

Tadmor said in his group's view all existing shareholders should have the opportunity to capture the company's potential value, and promised to "resist any effort that would deprive them of it."

The board, he said, is confident that the changes under way in Scitex would result in a substantial improvement in growth and profitability.

Meanwhile, Scitex's board of directors has appointed John Georges, a director in the company since 1992 and former chairman and chief executive officer of the International Paper Company, to undertake an overall examination of the company's operations.

BUSINESS BRIEF

An English version of the Yellow Pages telephone directory will be distributed to hotels, tourist information centers, travel agents and diplomatic missions here and abroad.

The directory has been compiled by the Yellow Pages company in conjunction with the government-run Association for the Promotion of Tourism in Israel. While the edition is primarily in English, the list of classifications will also be printed in Hebrew, German, French and Spanish.

In addition to the alphabetical list of entries, the directory will also contain 100 pages of information on tourist services, events, shopping, transport links and general points of interest about the country. The new Yellow Pages will soon be available on Internet, according to the company's managing director Joel Falk.

Jerusalem Post Staff

Kitan in negotiations to invest capital in Gibor Sabrina

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

KITAN, a subsidiary of Clal Industries, is negotiating to invest capital in Gibor Sabrina and dilute the holdings of existing shareholders as part of its plans to acquire control of the financially troubled underwear and socks manufacturer.

Earlier this week, Kitan informed the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange that it has resumed negotiations to gain control of Gibor.

Up until a few months ago the companies negotiated a similar transaction, but talks broke down after the company's major shareholders refused to sell.

Gibor Sabrina's major shareholders include the Kozov family, which founded the company and own 17% of the shares; Schoellerma Investments, which holds 12%; and Shumait Gorodetzky, who owns about 7%.

Haim Kozov, former general manager of Gibor and a major shareholder, confirmed that the companies are in advanced negotiations but refused to provide additional details of the transaction.

A textile source said Gibor's difficult financial situation leaves it no alternative but to allocate shares to an outside investor in an attempt to maintain the company's manufacturing activity, help redeem its bonds and implement a recovery program.

Because of Gibor's financial problems, commercial banks decided to suspend lines of credit to the company last week.

The source said the fact that Gibor has entered negotiations at a time when it is facing so many problems and knows it has no other alternative but to sell to survive puts it in a very weak bargaining position.

The company has a stock exchange value of about \$4.1m, but according to the source, Kitan will pay much less, because of Gibor's debts and the necessity to pay back liabilities to banks and debenture holders.

Kitan's decision to invest in Gibor is in the framework of its strategy to expand its activities in the textile field.

Kitan is mainly engaged in the manufacturing and sale of household textile products, while Gibor is active in production of underwear and socks.

In the announcement to the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, Kitan and Gibor said conclusion of the deal is subject to the agreement of its shareholders, a deal being reached with the banks and the debenture holders and obtaining all other relevant permits.

Meanwhile, Gibor Sabrina's debenture holders have agreed to postpone the first date of redemption of the debentures from the end of May to the end of June.

The company was supposed to redeem May debentures totaling NIS 20m. in six payments over a two-year period.

During the next few days, Gibor is expected to publish its financial statements for 1995.

The company ended the first nine months of the year with a net loss of NIS 8.3m.

Increase in tourism slows in March

JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

THE pace of rise in tourism slowed in March after quickening in January and February, the Central Bureau of Statistics said yesterday.

The number of visitors increased by more than 25 percent in January and February, compared to the same months one year ago. Following the spate of suicide bombings, March's increase slowed to 7%, with 233,700 visitors entering Israel compared to 216,900 in March, 1995.

"The rise in January and February was unexpectedly good," said Tourism Ministry spokeswoman Orly Doron, noting those months are the slower tourism months. "But in March there were the terrorist attacks, and this period was worse than [originally] expected."

In the first quarter, the overall number of visitors increased 20% to 622,100 from the same period last year. A total of 584,000 of the visitors were tourists, representing a 21% increase in this category.

Despite the slowdown, Doron said she expects the number of visitors here in 1996 to match 1995's high of 2.5 million people.

Indications of an increase in the budget deficit, accelerated import of consumer items, growth of retail commerce and banking credit all add up to a picture of expanding demand.

The trade balance thus grew significantly in the surveyed period, compared with the comparable periods in 1994-95.

Meanwhile, the labor markets remained relaxed, against the backdrop of a relatively low six-percent rate of unemployment.

Demand pressures in this market did not grow, although the market absorbed additional workers during the six-month period, the bank said.

Committee heeds Discount plea on banking bill amendment

EVELYN GORDON

A PROVISION forbidding banks to own less than 50 percent of another bank will not be part of a bill to reduce banks' holdings of real assets, the Knesset Finance Committee decided yesterday.

The controversial clause stated that banks would not be allowed to own shares in any bank or other financial institution - including mutual and provident funds, portfolio management firms and insurance agencies - unless it owned more than 50% of the institution in question.

Originally, the committee had decided to okay the clause with respect to holdings in other banks, but not necessarily with respect to financial institutions.

After wrestling with it for several days, however, the MKs decided to drop the clause entirely for the time being.

"It seemed very strange to us, and it also had nothing to do with the concentration of assets [in the banks' hands, which was the main point of the bill]," explained committee chairman Gedalya Gal



Gal denied committee's decision was result of pressure from Bank Discount.

(Labor).

"There was also no rush about it," he added, noting that the bill will not take effect for another four years anyway.

Furthermore, said Avraham Poraz (Meretz), who heads the coalition in the committee, the committee felt strongly that it was

improper to rush so many complex provisions through in the final days of the Knesset session.

For this reason, it decided to pass only those provisions which were essential to implement the Brodet Committee recommendations on cutting and capping bank holdings of real assets.

Most of the other changes proposed in the bill were therefore also dropped from the final version, which is due to come up for its final reading in the plenum today.

If the Treasury wants to reintroduce all these additional provisions in three months' time, Gal said, the committee will consider them then.

Gal denied that the committee's decision was in any way the result of pressure from Bank Discount, which has been lobbying to get the 50% rule dropped from the final bill.

Had this provision passed, Discount would have been forced to sell its minority stake in First International Bank, which accounts for about one-third of Discount's profits.

Elite Ind.'s net profits fall

COMPANY RESULTS GALIT LIPKIS BECK

ELITE Industries reported a drop in net profits to NIS 31.9 million from NIS 32.5m. in the corresponding period last year.

Management said net profits would have increased to NIS 49.7m. if not for irregular expenses and costs associated with the company's reorganization and efficiency measures abroad.

Net capital gains from the sale of half of a subsidiary's assets in Tel Aviv were NIS 8.8m.

Operating income fell to NIS 81.7m. from NIS 101m. Operating income here

increased to NIS 77.1m. from NIS 76.5m., while operating income from overseas subsidiaries plunged to NIS 4.6m. from NIS 24.5m.

Last year, Elite was forced to implement efficiency measures in its overseas subsidiaries in Europe following increased market competition.

Management said the recovery plan in France, which started last year and is scheduled to end in June, included the closure of production lines and investments in new lines.

Koor Industries plans to issue 15%-25% of Koor Properties

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

KOOR Industries has decided to issue 15 percent to 25% of Koor Properties by the end of 1997 based on a company valuation of about \$70 million, the company announced yesterday.

Koor Properties values itself at about \$40m., said general manager David Golomb.

He emphasized that this valuation does not take into account plans to change the designation of the land from agriculture to commercial or industrial properties and also ignores other development plans that the company expects to complete by the end of 1997.

Golomb's valuation also leaves out the value of 195 dunams in Ashkelon which Yuval Gad, a construction company in liquidation, is expected to transfer to Koor Properties as part of the creditors arrangement.

Koor Properties, which spoke to reporters for the first time yesterday, was established in 1993 as part of Koor Industries' strategy to develop land reserves owned by the company, Koor affiliates or third parties.

The company currently manages a total of 650 dunams of land, including 568,200 square meters of built-up land or space scheduled for building.

Invest in the world's major exchanges with Israel Discount Bank. It's a Small World!

STATE COMPTROLLER'S REPORT

'Lack of proper coordination led to inadequate supervision of provident funds'

TREASURY

THE Treasury's Capital Market's Insurance and Savings Division and the Bank of Israel's Supervisor of Banks, failed to coordinate between them supervision of the banking sector's handling of provident funds.

This failure led to inadequate supervision in some areas and duplication of others, according to the State Comptroller's Report.

The report says provident funds are among the most important financial tools available to savers who want to secure a source of income for when they get old.

Provident funds assets reached NIS 67 billion at the end of 1994. The report stressed that most of the provident funds are controlled by the commercial banks, even though this represents a conflict of interest resulting from the banks' role as manager of the fund in addition to its other bank activities - like granting of credit, ownership of non-financial assets and underwriting.

The comptroller saw no justification for the delay in legislation of the Provident Fund bill, which the government endorsed in May

1993. The law, which is supposed to define provident funds' activities - including division between the funds' activities and the banks and also supervision - was submitted for legislation only this past January.

The report suggest that the banks' ownership of provident funds and the funds' structure can create conflict of interests in several ways.

First, all the four large commercial banks manage more than one fund. Second, each one of the funds has a joint fund/bank director, joint manager (a bank worker that manages the fund), shared investment committee and joint investment program, as well as a common internal controller and accountant.

The comptroller emphasized that the fund manager and investment committee cannot always act in the interest of both the fund and bank, and hence are at risk of

conflicts of interest. The report criticizes the Treasury's capital, insurance and savings division's failure to receive procedures for allocating investments and division of responsibilities among the directors, investment committee and fund manager in writing from the funds.

The comptroller also criticizes the Supervisor of the Bank of Israel for failing to examine instructions and procedures that the banks were asked to define regarding investments of plan-

holders' money. The report also criticized the department for failing to oblige the funds to inform the public of commission fees charged and portfolio turnover.

The department also failed to set instructions regarding provident funds' reporting of transactions outside of the stock exchange and neglected to establish a computerized system to save and examine funds' quarterly results which include details of their investments in securities.

Galit Lipkis Beck

Torah Center must explain enrollment discrepancies

MA'AYAN TORAH EDUCATION CENTER

THE Ma'ayan Torah Education Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting religious education on the heritage of Jews from Arab lands, established a network of elementary schools which it represents in dealings with the state.

The center took it upon itself to equalize allocations for its institutions to those granted to Agudat Israel's independent education network.

In her report, the state comptroller asked the center to explain the apparent discrepancy between the number of pupils it claims to represent and the real figure.

In the academic year 1994-95, the center was responsible for 94 schools and Talmud Torah groups.

The official number of pupils registered in this period was 10,400. In 1994, the center's budget totaled NIS 44.1 million, 98 percent of which came from the Education Ministry. The organization's expenditures during the year were NIS 43m.

In 1992, the state comptroller launched an inquiry into the center's affairs. The report, prepared between 1994-95, recommended that an MK be appointed as an independent head for the center.

It also recommended that the budgets of the elementary schools and kindergartens be kept separate. It was found the center was temporarily funding the association of kindergartens with money that came from the Education Ministry to support its own activities.

Between 1992-94, this sum was NIS 4.3m. This figure was registered in the center's accounts as a debt, owed by the kindergartens.

The center failed to keep the budgets apart, the inquiry found, and transferred money

from one to the other. The Education Ministry allocated to the center more than NIS 3m. in both 1993 and 1994, which was to be transferred to the kindergartens, according to the report. This money should have been transferred to the kindergartens directly by the ministry, the report said.

The inquiry also found that in several instances in the academic year 1994-95, the number of pupils on the center's register were greater than the Education Ministry's recorded figures.

When funding the center for school year, the ministry used the center's figures rather than its own, consequently making an overpayment of NIS 1m.

In February, the state comptroller told the ministry there were several instances where there were large differences between the actual numbers of pupils in the center and those registered.

The report calls on the ministry to investigate the issue and come up with explanations, and said the center should repay an undisclosed sum to the Education Ministry.

The review examined the plants' performance in comparison with forecasts which accompanied the grants they had been awarded.

In the Planning Administration, the state comptroller looked into consulting services extended to medium-size and small businesses and, among others, the activities of the Fund for Preparation to Import Exposure.

The inquiry revealed that between 1985 and 1994, \$2 billion was granted in constant prices.

Despite the sizable magnitude of the sums at stake, the ministry's Investment Center did not launch a comprehensive inquiry into whether the programs actually generated the results for which they had been devised in the first place.

The state comptroller made such an inquiry into 159 recipients of the ministry's aid between 1985 and 1989, where investments ran until 1992.

According to the original forecasts, the number of employees in 16 large plants - whose combined aid totaled \$100 million - was supposed to expand by 2,600; in reality it shrank by 4,800.

An inquiry into the performance of 49 newly established, aid-recipient plants indicated that four in five of those failed to generate even 50% of their expected export growth, which was the basis for approving the aid in the first place.

In all, the report concludes that three in four of the plants aided over the relevant period failed to expand employment or generate increased exports, the two main purposes for which the Industry and Trade Ministry extends most of its aid programs.

Jerusalem Post Staff

INDUSTRY AND TRADE MINISTRY

The state comptroller reviewed aid given to industrial enterprises in the framework of the Capital-Investment Aid Law.

The inspection focused on two of that law's aims: improvement of the national balance of payments and expansion of Israel's employment base.

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS. Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (25.4.96). Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (30.4.96). Includes tables for currency basket, banknotes, and various currencies.

Drive Carefully! Arrive Safely! Advertisement with a car illustration.

Both indexes rise slightly

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

ROBERT DANIEL



STOCKS were little changed yesterday, with Tadiran rising for a second day after obtaining a military contract, while Elite fell on speculation it will take a charge for its European operations.

Trading in New York was quiet today in Tel Aviv, said David Rosenberg, chief of research at Pacific Mediterranean Securities in Herzliya.

At the same time, Rosenberg said he was optimistic about the Two-Sided Index's recovery of some eight percent in the past nine trading days, even after the central bank raised interest rates.

The Maof Index rose 0.04% to 214.87, while the Two-Sided Index was up 0.07% to 204.02.

The most active share was Teva, unchanged on NIS 5.8 million worth of shares traded, after Teva's American depository receipts traded in New York fell 4% to 45 1/4 on Monday.

Across the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, Tadiran rose 2.25%, after a Florida subsidiary of Tadiran got a \$53m. contract from the US Army for communications equipment.

Among actively traded issues, Koor rose 1.3%. Bezeq fell 0.5%, while the banks were mixed. Discount Bank and Bank Leumi added 0.25% and 0.5%, respectively. Bank Hapoalim fell 0.8%, and First International was unchanged.

Dead Sea Works rose 2%, Israeli Chemicals tacked on 1.1% and Agan was up 0.25%, while Maktshim and Bromine lost 0.4% and 1%, respectively.

Blue Square dropped 1.75%. Rival Supersol rose 3%, boosted by foreign investors' purchases, Pacific Mediterranean's Rosenberg said. (Bloomberg)

French stocks rise, buck trend of listless trading

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - A yen attack on the dollar which cut it down by two yen in two days appeared to run out of steam yesterday, and French stocks bucked a trend of dull and listless trading in Europe to close sharply higher.

European bourses were mixed with sentiment dampened by lower early trading on Wall Street. London closed 8.7 points up at the top of a narrow trading range in a cautious market, while German shares ended post-bourse trading down, but up from earlier lows.

The Paris bourse was most positive, taking heart from new government data indicating the economy showed signs of recovery and closing up three quarters of a percent.

In the foreign exchange market the dollar consolidated well above 104 yen in European afternoon trading but was still seen as vulnerable. The absence of intervention from the Bank of Japan to defend it against the yen was causing furrowed brows.

In the European afternoon, fears that the Japanese central bank would ambush the market on the downside allowed the US currency to build a base above 104 yen following its two yen fall.

But the respite for the dollar was seen as temporary. If the Bank of Japan stayed out of the frame, dealers said, it was only a matter of time before the dollar drifted lower still.

The main question circulating in the market was whether the BOJ was comfortable with the dollar at these levels or whether it was lulling the market into a false sense of security.

While dollar weakness against the yen was the focus, the US currency firmed against the mark to 14-month highs - pushing strongly above 1.53 mark level. It was boosted by strong US consumer confidence data and speculation the Bundesbank will trim interest rates in the not too distant future, promoting growth rather than worrying about inflation.

US stocks rebound, but still close lower

WALL STREET REPORT

NEW YORK (AP) - Stocks rebounded yesterday, after trailing lower with bonds on new signs of a strengthening economy.

Technology and small-company issues recovered from some profit-taking to lead some indexes to new records, but trading remained hesitant in advance of some key economic data due later this week.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 4.33 points to close at 5,569.08, after dropping almost 26 points earlier in the session. It was the fourth straight session that the sluggish blue-chip index ended with a change of less than 15 points.

Much of the Dow's weakness was the result of a drop in oil prices, which hurt the average's three oil stocks, but the index suffered again from fears of looming inflation and higher interest rates.

The Nasdaq composite index and the Russell 2000 list of smaller companies were heading toward their ninth straight record finishes as those issues recovered from some early profit-taking.

In recent weeks, technology and small company stocks have rallied on a series of strong earnings reports and enthusiasm that

an improving economy should benefit those sectors most.

Oil stocks were lower as crude prices gave up some of their earlier gains in commodities trading. Among the Dow industrials, Texaco, Exxon, and Chevron accounted for most of the blue-chip index's drop.

Recent increases in energy and food prices on commodities markets have fueled anxieties about inflation ahead of Friday's report on April employment.

The past two monthly employment reports have sent financial markets plunging after revealing bigger-than-expected jumps in new jobs.

On Wall Street, declining issues outnumbered advancers by a slim margin on the NYSE, with 1,175 up, 1,204 down and 760 unchanged. Volume totaled 393.18 million shares, vs. 342.53 million in the previous session.

The NYSE's composite index was unchanged at 351.24. The Standard and Poor's 500-stock index rose 0.02 to 654.18.

The Nasdaq composite index rose 1.62 to 1,189.82. The Russell 2000 gained 0.06 to 348.28.

At the American Stock Exchange, the market value index fell 1.85 to 590.90.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

Table with columns: MARK, STERLING, YEN, SFR, FF. Rows include STERLING, YEN, SFR, FF.

TEL AVIV STOCKS

Multi-sided trading

Table of stock prices and changes for Multi-sided trading, including Commercial, Banks, and Industrials.

Two-sided trading

Table of stock prices and changes for Two-sided trading, including Name, Price, Change, Volume, and % Volume.

Investment Companies

Table of investment company stock prices and changes.

Property, Building & Agriculture

Table of property, building, and agriculture stock prices and changes.

Oil Exploration

Table of oil exploration stock prices and changes.

PARALLEL LIST

Table of parallel listed stock prices and changes.

Trade & Service, Building Industries

Table of trade and service, building industries stock prices and changes.

INTERNATIONAL STOCK PRICES

Table of international stock prices for various countries.

NEW YORK

Table of New York stock prices and changes.

US COMMODITIES

Table of US commodity prices and changes.

Spot market metals (US)

Table of spot market metals prices and changes.

New York metal futures

Table of New York metal futures prices and changes.

London metal fixes

Table of London metal fixes prices and changes.

Key Representative Rates

Table of key representative rates for US dollar, Sterling, and Mark.

INFLATION MARKETS

New York market indexes

Table of New York market indexes including DJ Industrials, DJ Transport, NYSE Composite, etc.

Other stock market indexes

Table of other stock market indexes including FTSE 100, Nikkei 225, etc.

Israeli stocks in NY

Table of Israeli stocks listed in NY including NIS/AMEX, Bank Leumi, etc.

INFLATION MARKETS

Dollar crossrates (US)

Table of dollar crossrates for various currencies.

Labor rates

Table of labor rates for various categories.

Foreign financial data courtesy of CommStock Trading Ltd.

Text describing foreign financial data services.

INFLATION MARKETS

US commodities

Table of US commodity prices and changes.

Spot market metals (US)

Table of spot market metals prices and changes.

New York metal futures

Table of New York metal futures prices and changes.

London metal fixes

Table of London metal fixes prices and changes.

Israel loses 5-4 against South Korea

DEREK FATTAL

ISRAEL'S national soccer squad almost staged the "mother of all comebacks" at Bloomfield in yesterday evening's friendly international against South Korea.

After looking all but hung, drawn and quartered as they trailed 0-5 to the Koreans by the 56th minute, the Israelis forced themselves back into the game through some tenacious play by Haim Revivo. The hosts managed to score four times in the final eleven minutes to bring the result to a much more respectable 5-4 scoreline.

Unfortunately time just ran out for the Israelis and saved the Koreans from an embarrassing overturn.

The Koreans who had failed to register a win in their last seven matches cut through the Israeli back line in the fifth minute when Suo Hwang beat Amir Shelah on the right and released the ball into the path of Kim who edged into goal from close range.

Revivo hit the woodwork in the 11th minute as Israel tried to level.

The match began to swing Korea's way when Cho's savage 18 meter-shot ripped into the back of Bonnie Ginsburg's goal in the 37th minute. The Israelis suffered another blow as Sin curled the ball round Ginsburg before the break.

An angry pep talk did little to curb the misery as the Koreans

added 10 minutes after the resumption with Hwang capitalizing on an error by Moshe Glam. Israel's World Cup preparations looked in absolute tatters when Hwang struck in from the penalty spot a minute later following a foul by David Amsalem. With the visitors five goals up Israel fans began to jeer their own side while cheering the opposition.

Revivo began the revival pulling a goal back in the 79th minute. A minute later Revivo was awarded a penalty after being tumbled in the area, allowing Tal Bannin to further reduce the deficit.

Three minutes from time Revivo performed a brilliant "turn and shoot" movement to make the scoreline 3-5.

Itzik Zohar provided Israel's final retort in the last minute of the game, a ruthless drive from outside the box that helped retain some honor in defeat.

With this game being the last scheduled international match before the end of the season, Shlomo Scharf clearly has his work cut out to turn his men into viable World Cup qualifying contenders in time for Israel's opening match at the beginning of September against Bulgaria.

As for the Bulgarian, Russian and Cypriot scouts who witnessed this match, Israel's defensive weaknesses have been blatantly exposed.

Boxer dies from injuries

MELBOURNE (AP) - Australian featherweight boxer Lance Houbson died yesterday in hospital from a brain hemorrhage after he collapsed in the sixth round of a fight Monday night.

Neurosurgeons had earlier yesterday operated on the 23-year-old boxer to remove a blood clot from the outside of his brain after he collapsed during the fight at Melbourne's Glasshouse.



TAKING THE LEAD - Newcastle's Keith Gillespie (1) fights for the ball with Leeds's Nigel Worthington during their match Monday.

Newcastle keeps championship chance alive

LONDON (Reuters) - Newcastle cleared the first hurdle in last-gasp bid to wrest the English championship from Manchester United with a 1-0 win at Leeds on Monday.

Northern Ireland international Keith Gillespie celebrated his first start in 10 games with the only goal in the 17th minute - a vital breakthrough as Newcastle had looked decidedly edgy.

Three vital points left Newcastle three behind its Manchester rivals but it still faces two more tough games in this final week of Premier League action to United's one.

The team plays Nottingham Forest away tomorrow and Tottenham at home on Sunday. Manchester United is away to Middlesbrough on Sunday.

Manchester United, beaten in seven of their last eight matches, threatened to shatter Newcastle's

dream in the early stages. South African Lucas Radebe saw his 18-meter shot bounce to safety off the bar in the third minute and Andy Gray's header rebounded off the right-hand post seven minutes later.

But the lucky escapes were forgotten when Peter Beardsley swung in a corner, his England teammate Les Ferdinand headed towards the goalmouth and Gillespie was on hand to steer a header home.

It was his first goal since December 3.

The breakthrough settled Newcastle and its authority should have been rewarded with a second goal a minute before halftime when Rob Lee shaved the upright with a shot from eight meters.

Colombian Faustino Asprilla suffered a night of near misses and misplaced passes and was

substituted by Lee Clark after 65 minutes.

Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan, who admitted that his team had played badly for the first 15 minutes, insisted: "The battle is still on and Manchester United have not won this yet."

| Club | P | W | D | L | GF | GA | Pts |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Man Utd | 37 | 24 | 7 | 6 | 70 | 35 | 78 |
| Newcastle | 36 | 24 | 4 | 8 | 64 | 35 | 76 |
| Liverpool | 36 | 20 | 9 | 7 | 68 | 32 | 69 |
| Aston Villa | 37 | 18 | 9 | 10 | 52 | 34 | 63 |
| Arsenal | 36 | 18 | 11 | 7 | 47 | 31 | 59 |
| Everton | 37 | 18 | 10 | 9 | 63 | 44 | 58 |
| Blackburn | 37 | 17 | 7 | 13 | 58 | 45 | 58 |
| Tottenham | 36 | 15 | 12 | 9 | 56 | 38 | 47 |
| Not. Forest | 36 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 46 | 53 | 54 |
| Chelsea | 37 | 14 | 10 | 11 | 44 | 41 | 50 |
| West Ham | 37 | 14 | 8 | 15 | 42 | 51 | 50 |
| Middlesbrough | 37 | 11 | 10 | 16 | 35 | 47 | 43 |
| Leeds | 36 | 12 | 8 | 16 | 34 | 54 | 42 |
| Wimbledon | 37 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 55 | 70 | 40 |
| Sheff. Wed. | 37 | 10 | 9 | 18 | 47 | 60 | 39 |
| Coventry | 37 | 8 | 13 | 16 | 42 | 57 | 37 |
| Southampton | 37 | 9 | 10 | 18 | 34 | 52 | 37 |
| Man. City | 37 | 9 | 10 | 18 | 31 | 56 | 37 |
| I-P-R | 37 | 9 | 6 | 22 | 38 | 54 | 33 |
| I-Bolton | 37 | 8 | 5 | 24 | 38 | 68 | 29 |

Blazers score must win over Jazz

PORTLAND - Arvydas Sabonis scored 27 points but it was Buck Williams' putback of a Sabonis miss with 14 seconds left in overtime that snapped a tie as the Portland Trail Blazers stayed alive with a 94-91 playoff victory Monday over the Utah Jazz.

Portland now trails Utah two games to one, with Game Four of the best-of-five opening round Western Conference series slated today in Portland.

Rod Strickland added 19 points for the Trail Blazers, who blew a 13-point lead in the second half while playing their first playoff game at the new Rose Garden.

"We played hard, but we certainly didn't play well," said Strickland. "But we gutted it out and we got the victory."

Karl Malone scored 35 points and John Stockton added 13 for Utah.

Utah rallied at the end, taking advantage of Portland's ineptitude at the free throw line. The Blazers missed 4-of-6 free throws, three by Sabonis, in the final minute to open the door for the Jazz.

Portland shot just 27 of 46 from the charity stripe.

Hawks 90, Pacers 83. Steve Smith scored 26 points, including a crucial 3-pointer with 1:31 remaining, and Atlanta took command of their Eastern Conference series.

Christian Laetner, appearing in his first NBA playoff series, added 24 points and Mookie Blaylock tied a playoff record with eight steals, including two in the closing seconds.

Atlanta, which now has a 2-1 edge in the best-of-5 series, is trying to advance to the second round for only the second time in eight years.

NBA Playoffs (First Round, Best-of-Five) MONDAY'S RESULTS: Atlanta 90, Indiana 83. Atlanta leads series 2-1. Portland 94, Utah 91 (OT). Utah leads series 2-1.

ATLANTA (83) McKee 6-14 1-1 13, D.Davis 6-7 0-0 12, Smith 5-14 3-4 13, Pierce 4-14 0-0 10, Jackson 3-10 1-1 7, A.Davis 2-3 4-6 5, Best 2-4 0-0 4, Fowell 2-5 0-0 2. Totals 94-83.

ATLANTA (80) Augmon 2-7 2-4 6, Long 6-15 1-2 13, Laetner 7-17 10-11 24, Smith 10-15 1-2 26, Blaylock 6-15 2-3 16, Elio 0-3 0-0 0, Henderson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 83-77.

INDIANA (83) McKee 6-14 1-1 13, D.Davis 6-7 0-0 12, Smith 5-14 3-4 13, Pierce 4-14 0-0 10, Jackson 3-10 1-1 7, A.Davis 2-3 4-6 5, Best 2-4 0-0 4, Fowell 2-5 0-0 2. Totals 94-83.

Sports Channel's baseball broadcast a crackerjack addition

THERE'S a welcome new sound emanating from Sports Channel's broadcasts: The crack of the bat. Finally yielding to many viewers' wishes, Sports Channel has signed a deal with ESPN to bring us the US cable sports station's Sunday Night Game of the Week, with Opher Shelach providing commentary.

baseball the entire way this year. Sure, there were some points to quibble about. Baseball doesn't exactly move along at a lightning pace, which leads broadcasters to sometimes try too hard to fill in the down time with silly stuff.

responding: "That's your first bit of analysis tonight with which I can't agree." Still, Shelach had some line drives, as when he noted the tremendous number of home runs hit at Coors Field, saying: "In Coors Field, even I have power."

now is for Shelach to review the standings and the week's outstanding action in the studio. Happy baseball fans should write letters of thanks to Sports Channel for taking us out to the ballpark.

cially Blatt, who definitely has broadcaster potential. The replays were not overdone, the camera angles were fine - in short, a pleasure to watch. We similarly enjoyed Channel 3's NBA playoff package this past Sunday night, largely because of the unexpected quiet. Arik Hoenig deserves full points for finally allowing us to hear the US announcers for the entire game, without interruptions by a chorus of local "experts" in the studio.

play-by-play man Ronen Gurevich, whose biggest screw-up, besides getting the score wrong several times during the game, was his inability to read properly. At halftime, Sports Channel got as caught up with the NBA playoffs, courtesy of tape from CNN. The graphic on the screen supplied by CNN said the Knicks' Anthony Mason had 12 rebounds against Cleveland. Gurevich noted the Knicks forward had "12 assists." Also, Sports Channel should lay off the dopey shots of cute girls in the crowd.

Thankfully, Shelach was around for the line of the year. When Maccabi's Brad Leaf and Herzliya's Amir Katz got totally intertwined while Leaf was trying to stop Katz on defense, Shelach noted: "There are some countries in which the position Katz and Leaf are in is considered illegal."

CLASSIFIEDS

RATES

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DWELLINGS General

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Quarter-final of the 1996 World Cup in football. The match was held in the stadium of the host nation, the United States, in the city of Atlanta, Georgia, on Wednesday, May 1, 1996. The match was a close one, with the United States leading 1-0 at halftime, but the Netherlands equalized in the second half. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

Baseball - Monday's NL results: San Diego 2, Houston 6; Atlanta 4, St. Louis 1; New York 3, Montreal 2; Los Angeles 16, Chicago 4; only games scheduled.

Monday's AL results: Seattle at Milwaukee, ppd., rain; Chicago 4, California 3; Baltimore 8, Texas 7; Minnesota 11, Kansas City 6; only games scheduled.

CRICKET - Results and close of play scores in Benson and Hedges Cup (50 overs) first round cricket matches yesterday:

At Farnham: Northamptonshire beat Scotland by five wickets. Scotland 174-4 innings closed (L.Phillip 69, J.Williams 51 not out). Northamptonshire 175-5 in 31.4 overs (R.Bailey 66).

At Canterbury: Kent beat Middlesex by six wickets. Middlesex 219-6 innings closed (J.Carr 55). Kent 220-4 in 47.2 overs (C.Hopper 62).

At The Oval: Surrey beat Gloucestershire by three wickets. Gloucestershire 307-4 innings closed (R.Cassidy 137 not out, A.Wright 65). Surrey 308-7 in 48.5 overs (A.Brown 52).

At Southampton: Hampshire beat Sussex by 67 runs. Hampshire 235-9 innings closed (P.Walsh 53). Sussex 168 in 43.3 overs (C.Ashby 53).

At Chesham: Essex beat British Universities by 107 runs. Essex 331-5 innings closed (G.Gooch 106, P.Pritchard 52, R.Irani 62 not out). British Universities 224-9 innings closed (C.Gupta 54 not out; R.Irani 4-30).

At Trent Bridge: Nottinghamshire beat Worcestershire by five wickets. Worcestershire 188 in 48.3 overs (T.Curtis 61). Nottinghamshire 190-5 in 42.4 overs (R.Robinson 52).

SCOREBOARD

BASEBALL - Monday's NL results: San Diego 2, Houston 6; Atlanta 4, St. Louis 1; New York 3, Montreal 2; Los Angeles 16, Chicago 4; only games scheduled.

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Olmert: Jews will be majority in annexed areas of capital by '97

BILL HUTMAN

Jews, by the end of the year, will for the first time constitute a majority of the population in the parts of Jerusalem captured and annexed by Israel in 1967, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert vowed yesterday.

Olmert, speaking at a press conference at which the 1994/1995 Jerusalem Statistics Yearbook was released, said building projects at various sites in these areas will attract the additional Jewish population.

The yearbook showed 49 percent of the residents of these areas were Jewish at the middle of last year, the latest figures available. The city's total population was 583,700, including 413,700 Jews and 170,000 non-Jews.

The Arab population continues to grow slowly in relation to the Jewish population. Just after the Six Day War the ratio was 74.2 percent Jews and 25.8 percent Arabs. Last year, it was 70.9 percent Jews and 29.1 percent Arabs.

Olmert denied allegations of discrimination in regard to housing policy. He admitted, however, that the proposed new neighborhood of Har Homa is meant for Jews only. "Our policy is to prevent the mixing together of different populations. It just causes unnecessary friction. This is why we don't encourage neighborhoods where haredim and secular Jews live together," Olmert said.

Har Homa, which has stirred much controversy since it was first proposed more than five years ago, is situated near Jerusalem's border with Bethlehem and Beit Sahur.

Olmert said he hopes construction work will start in the near future, following repeated petitions to the courts against the project.

He said he also favored the construction of a string of settlements to the east of the city, but did not elaborate.

"Those who accuse the city of discriminating against Arabs in all that is connected with building are not looking at the facts," Olmert said.

He said zoning plans permit Arabs to build some 15,240 units in the city. "This is more than enough to solve all their housing problems," Olmert said.

The yearbook was compiled by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. Institute researcher Yisrael Kimche also presented several studies on Arab construction in Jerusalem at the press conference.

One study was a review of aerial photographs taken in 1968 and again last year, which showed the majority of Arab construction on the periphery of the city, spreading into the administered territories.

Some 60% of the new building since 1968 was concentrated in Arab villages just outside city limits, predominantly in the direction of El-Bireh, Kimche said.

Other highlights of the yearbook include figures showing that "negative migration" continues to plague Jerusalem, with 6,200 more residents leaving than newcomers arriving.

The figures also show that the haredi population is likely to continue to grow. Some 48% of all elementary school pupils and 57% of kindergarten pupils learn in the haredi education system.

Jerusalem's population is expected to reach \$17,500 by the year 2010. The non-Jewish percentage of the population is likely to be 31%, and the haredi population 26%, or 38% of the Jewish population.



Boaters celebrate the dedication yesterday of Nahal Lachish Park, restored in a four-year project by the Jewish National Fund. This 600-dunam park near Ashdod is the first of 40 such JNF stream reclamation projects to be completed.

Ministers to have pension rights cut, but salaries to be raised

EVELYN GORDON

MINISTERS' pension rights will be reduced to the same level as that of the rest of the population, but they will enjoy a 57% wage rise as compensation, the Knesset Finance Committee decided yesterday.

The committee decided that starting with the next Knesset, ministers will accumulate pension rights worth only 2% of their salaries each year - like ordinary workers do - instead of 4% a year as has been the custom until now.

In compensation, however, ministers will get a huge wage increase as of October 1. Currently, a minister's salary is defined as 6% more than that of an

MK, while the prime minister's salary is 12% more than that of an MK. On October 1, these differentials will be doubled: ministers' salaries will be 12.5% more than those of MKs, and the prime minister's salary will be 25% more.

Since MKs' salaries are going up 33% on this date, this will translate into a 57% increase for all ministers, including the prime minister.

The committee's decision means that MKs' pension rights will be reduced from 4% to 2% a year as well, as recommended by the Rosen-Zvi Commission. The

House Committee had decided earlier that it would agree to this portion of the commission's recommendations only if ministers suffered a similar cut in pension rights. While MKs' salaries are determined by the House Committee, ministers' salaries are the purview of the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee also favors reducing judges' pension rights from 4% to 2% a year. However, since it wants to give the judges a chance to air their views, it will vote on this issue only next week.

Finance Minister Avraham Shohat told the committee that the pension rights of all public employees should be reduced from 4% to 2%, including mayors as well as ministers and judges. He noted that the Civil Service Commission has already canceled the 4% pensions for ministry director-generals, effective July 1.

"The sooner we do this, the better it will be for everyone," Shohat said. Shohat added that it was time to stop the practice of rewarding workers via improved pension rights. If a worker is good, the proper way to reward him is with a higher salary, he said.

WEATHER

Forecast: Hot and dry.

AROUND THE WORLD

| Country | Low | High | Wind | Cloud |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Americas | 15-20 | 20-25 | 10-15 | partly |
| Asia | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| Europe | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| Africa | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| Australia | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| Japan | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| India | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| South America | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| South Africa | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| UK | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| USSR | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| Canada | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| USA | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |
| Israel | 10-15 | 15-20 | 10-15 | partly |

Winning cards and numbers

In yesterday's Mifal Hapais daily chance card draw, the lucky cards were the 10 of spades, jack of hearts, queen of diamonds, and nine of clubs. In last night's weekly Lotto drawing, the winning numbers were 5, 11, 15, 37, 39 and 46 and the additional number was 26.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man sentenced to life for murder
Yuval Gafri, 23, of Bnei Brak, was sentenced to life imprisonment by Tel Aviv District Court yesterday for the November 1994 murder of Yitzhak Winkler, 30, of Pardess Katz. Gafri, armed with a knife and carrying gloves, went to Winkler's home for a homosexual liaison intending to murder and rob him. As soon as Winkler fell asleep, Gafri hit him in the head with a wine bottle and stabbed him in the chest, penetrating his heart. He then, on that night and the following night, robbed the house of anything of value. *Itim*

Court orders probe of prisoner's death
Haifa Magistrate's Court yesterday ordered an autopsy on the body of Mordechai Gur-Arye, 45, found dead in his cell at Kishon Prison. Police had made the request after Gur-Arye's body was found in the cell he shared with other prisoners. *Itim*

Third fire at Ein Fash'ha reserve
Fire broke out yesterday, the third in two days, at the Ein Fash'ha nature reserve, near the Dead Sea. Three fire engines, assisted by an IDF helicopter, fought the blaze for several hours. Some 10,000 people at the site had to be evacuated, causing traffic jams in the area. *Itim*

Police expected to call more top sportsmen as illegal betting probe continues

BILL HUTMAN

SEVERAL National League basketball players are expected to be summoned in the coming days for questioning, in connection with the widening investigation of illegal sports gambling by the Police Serious Crimes Division.

Yesterday, four more soccer players, from Hapoel Kfar Sava and Hapoel Petah Tikva, were interrogated at the division's headquarters in Petah Tikvah.

On Monday, four other Hapoel Kfar Sava players were questioned.

"This is just the beginning," said a source close to the investigation. "A lot more players, from more than one club, are going to be summoned in the coming days. And I don't mean just soccer clubs," the source said.

Police are investigating whether several big time gam-

blers were fixing games. Police also believe that they are also onto a gambling operation that was turning over millions of shekels every week.

Cmdr. Yoram Rodman, head of the Serious Crimes Division, confirmed that basketball players would also be summoned for

questioning. Briefly answering reporters' questions outside the headquarters, he denied reports a grenade was placed in the car of police informant, Yitzhak Haguel, in the case.

Ophir Kopel, one of the players questioned yesterday, denied any wrongdoing. "I don't know why I was summoned. I haven't done anything," he said. "I understand they are summoning

a lot of us (players). There are those who have something to worry about. I don't."

On Sunday, after months of undercover investigation, police detained 14 players and gamblers in a sweep that shook the nation's sporting community. Income Tax Authority and VAT investigators are working with police on the investigation.

MDA wants court to remove Messala's replacement from Navon panel

EVELYN GORDON

MAGEN David Adom yesterday petitioned the High Court of Justice against the appointment of

Shlomo Mula, secretary of the Unified Ethiopian Immigrants

Association, to the Navon Commission investigating the destruction of blood donations from Ethiopians.

Mula was appointed to replace association chairman Addisu Messala, after the High Court ordered him to resign in response to an earlier petition by Dr. Amnon Ben-David. MDA director of blood services. The court ruled that Messala, who had repeatedly and forcefully stated he held Ben-David responsible for the affair and wanted his head, could not be relied on for an objective inquiry.

The MDA charged that Prime Minister Shimon Peres had made the same mistake a second time by appointing Mula. Like Messala, the petition said, Mula was one of the organizers of a violent demonstration which demanded Ben-David's resignation; he participated in filing a petition to the court, which was later withdrawn, against MDA

and Ben-David; and he has repeatedly stated in interviews that he wants to see Ben-David, MDA director-general Amos Luria, and other senior MDA officials fired.

Therefore, the petition said, Mula's appointment is a direct violation of the earlier High Court ruling, which stated that the government must choose a replacement for Messala who does not have preconceived notions. Furthermore, the petition argued, Mula was not appointed to the commission until after it had finished hearing almost all the testimony - including that of Ben-David - and it is ridiculous to have him sitting in judgment on evidence he had not heard.

The petition stressed, however, that MDA does not oppose Ethiopian representation on the commission in general. MDA has no problem at all with the second Ethiopian on the commission, Natnar Hillel, the petitioner noted.

International Judaica Design awarded

HELEN KAYE

THREE Israeli designers, a Japanese and an American won top honors in the International Judaica Design Competition held in honor of the Jerusalem 3000 celebrations.

A Passover seder plate by Esther Knobel and kiddush cups by Vered Kaminski and Leo Contini won each of them the \$10,000 second prize. Third prizes of \$5,000 each went to Kenji Ekkan (Japan) and Adam Berkowitz (US) for their Torah crowns.

The eight-member international jury headed by former Supreme Court Justice Menahem Elon decided against the award of a first prize. The winners were chosen from 360 entries submitted from all over the world, including Korea, Singapore and Turkey.

The awards ceremony will be on May 8 within the framework of the Judaica Fair at the International Convention Center in Jerusalem.

PA-Israel final status talks to start May 5

TALKS on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip will start on Sunday in Taba. PLO official Hassan Asfour said yesterday.

According to the Israeli-PA peace deal, final status talks to address sensitive issues such as the future of Jerusalem, the settlements, borders and refugees were to start by May 4. Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) will head the Palestinian delegation, Asfour said. Foreign Minister Director-General Uri Saviv will lead Israel's negotiating team, Asfour said.

A senior PLO official said unofficial talks on final status issues have been going on for three months. Other PLO officials said Sunday's talks would be largely ceremonial. (Reuter)

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